



Title Psychosocial and mental health challenges of
international students compared to British
students in UK universities

Name Khaled Saeed M. Alsaad

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**Psychosocial and Mental Health Challenges of International Students
compared to British Students in UK Universities**

By

Khaled Saeed M. Alsaad

**A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

According to Harman (2004)¹, international students were one of the main sources of finance in the UK, US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. These students may face many difficulties once they arrive in countries like the UK, trying to adjust to their new surroundings. They confront, for example, more difficulties and challenges than the British students beginning a university course, especially if English is not their first language and the culture of their motherland is substantially different from British culture. Apart from language and cultural barriers, other reported difficulties include high academic demand, missing family and friends, lack of social support, lower self-confidence, deficiencies with study skills and a need to have more assertiveness (Poyrazli et al., 2002)². Currently, not enough research has been published regarding acculturative stress and social support, including its relationship with psychological mental health amongst international students studying at UK universities.

The main purposes of this study were threefold: (1) investigate the association between mental health and psychosocial variables amongst both international and British students (in UK universities); (2) explore the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of international students in the context of acculturation, while they study abroad in the UK universities; and finally (3) to triangulate and integrate the findings of this study obtained from two distinct approaches of combined results.

A concurrent triangulation mixed methods design was employed, consisting of three main studies. (a) I (Pilot study): a quantitative study employing simple yet effective cross-sectional approaches through its intention to using sample data; (b) II (Main study): a quantitative method specifically utilising cross-sectional design using authoritative data; and (c) III: a qualitative research conducting semi-structured interviews (using two qualitative questionnaires) to examine the metaphors participants used to describe their experiences in the host society.

Study I: A snowball purposive sampling technique was used to select 358 students (international and British) studying in UK universities. Three different UK universities were selected. Eight pre-existing questionnaires were first tested for validity and reliability, then

¹ Harman, G. (2004). New directions in internationalizing higher education: Australia's development as an exporter of higher education services. *Higher Education Policy*, 17(1), 101-120.

² Poyrazli, S., Arbona, C., Bullington, R., & Pisecco, S. (2001). Adjustment issues of Turkish college students studying in the United States. *College Student Journal*, 35(1), 52-52.

were utilised to examine the relationships between mental health and seven other independent variables.

Study II: A snowball purposive sampling technique was used to select 796 students (international and British) studying in UK universities. Ten different UK universities were selected. The previous eight pre-existing questionnaires used in Study I were used in Study II, but the difference was that GHQ-12 was replaced by GHQ-28, and the IAI and SAI forms of the Three Assimilation Indexes were excluded.

Study III: A snowball purposive sampling technique was used to select 30 students (international) studying in three UK universities. A semi-structured interview was conducted with these students. This study used thematic analysis to categorise metaphors and analyse the qualitative data.

With a response rate of 82%, Study I showed that international students from the Middle East are less affected by cultural distress than other students from outside of Europe.

In addition, many students find themselves leaning more towards religion to deal with the new cultural environment. Study II had an 80% response rate and found that there was an association between three out of five predictor variables (coping flexibility, social support and coping) with mental health, for both international and British students. In addition, the study found that there was an association between three out of seven predictor variables (coping strategy, religious problem solving, and acculturation) with mental health in international students. In Study III, the metaphors supported the quantitative results in terms of finding that a substantial number of the respondents had negative feelings about living in the UK and found the new setting depressing. The findings of the two quantitative studies (Study I and Study II) found that there is an association between international students and British students and coping flexibility with mental health. This finding has been confirmed by Study III which addressed metaphorical phrases used by international students.

These findings indicate that interventions are strongly required in order to prevent and control potential psychological problems in both groups. The main recommendations are that regular training sessions should be provided for all international students, giving strategies for coping with the new culture. It is concluded that social support played a moderating role in the relationship between culture stress as well as mental health only in international students. These findings imply that strategies could be created to help students to cope with their

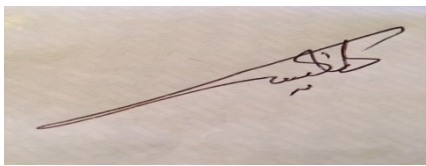
mental issues and reduce the impact of distress they experience during their study. This might have a positive effect on their academic achievement consequently.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bedfordshire. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate: Khaled Saeed M Alsaad

Signature:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'K. Saeed M. Alsaad', written on a light-colored, slightly textured surface.

Dated:

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the soul of my father, may Allah forgive him and grant him his highest paradise (Ameen).

I am forever indebted to the greatest woman in my life, my beloved mother, whose unconditional love and support at each time of my life made me the man that I am today. Her deep faith, her prayers, and supreme trust are always the most effective motivation to accomplish my ultimate goal.

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Terms of Reference

Scale	S	Sojourner Social Support	SSS
Subscale	SUB	Socio-emotional Support - (Subscale)	SES
Total	T	Instrumental Support - (Subscale)	IS
Religious Problem Solving	RPS	General Health Questionnaire	GHQ
Religious Problem Solving-Subscale	RPS-SUB	Depression -(Subscale)	De
Collaborative -(Subscale)	Co	Anxiety -(Subscale)	An
Self directed -(Subscale)	SD	Loss Of Confidence - (Subscale)	LOS
Deferring -(Subscale)	D	Social Function -(Subscale)	SF
1- Culture Assimilation Index	CAI	Coping Flexibility Scale	CFS
Food and Drink -(Subscale)	FD	Evaluation Coping - (Subscale)	EC
Clothes-(Subscale)	C	Adaption-Coping -(Subscale)	A-C
Language Facility and Used - (Subscale)	LFU	Culture Stress	CS
Media - (Subscale)	M	Social-cultural Adaptation Scale	SCAS
2- Identification Assimilation Index	IAI	Academic Adaptation - (Subscale)	AA
Language Preference - (Subscale)	LP	Survival -(Subscale)	SI
Residence Preference - (Subscale)	RP	Interpersonal Adaptation - (Subscale)	I A
Customs Preference -(Subscale)	CP	Venting -(Subscale)	V
Religion -(Subscale)	R	Substance -(Subscale)	Su
Identity -(Subscale)	I	Behavioural Disengagement - (Subscale)	BD
3- Structural Assimilation Index.	SAI	Self Blaming -(Subscale)	SB
Education -(Subscale)	E	Brief Cope	Cope
Neighbours-(Subscale))	N	Active Coping -(Subscale)	AC
Friends-(Subscale)	F	Planning -(Subscale)	P
		Positive Reframing- (Subscale)	PR
Accepting -(Subscale)	A	Religion -(Subscale)	Re
Humour -(Subscale)	H	Using Instrumental Support- (Subscale)	UIS
Self-Distracting-(Subscale)	S-D	Denial -(Subscale)	De

1 Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to study

Education is very important to the UK economy (London & Partners, 2015), with international students contributing around £3 billion and 37,000 jobs; in 2014-2015 there were nearly half a million students coming from abroad in order to carry out their studies at universities within the UK (UKCISA, 2016b). Globally, there are nearly five million students who could be classed as overseas students studying away from their home state, and it is predicted that this number would rise by 10% annually (Oxford University, 2015). One of the most popular English-speaking countries for students in the world is the UK, after the United States (Oxford University, 2015), and students arrive in the UK from 200 different countries (British Council, 2016). These students bring diversity and financial rewards to the welcoming country and the students themselves benefit from a quality level of higher education.

However, studying abroad may present many challenges for students and they may experience a number of issues in adjusting to the new cultural environment; these can play a negative role in student experiences as well as making it difficult for them to benefit from their studies. Among the most common stressors that university students may experience are the, which are so dissimilar to what they are used to, adjusting to a different social academic demands environment, in addition to the other issues likely to affect all students leaving home for the first time (Furnham, 2004). In addition, international students can be confronted with various problems related to their new surroundings, when they arrive in the United Kingdom. They are more likely to encounter more issues than British students when they start a university course, and this is made worse due to the overseas students' native language not being English, which also has a negative impact on the students' cultural experience (Heyn, 2013). It is no surprise that the most common problems they experience are related to language, different academic demands, and homesickness, the lack of support from friends and family, and a general lack of confidence (Pederson, 1991). Simple tasks such as everyday routine, plus any engagement between individuals socially require mindful, confident, meticulous planning, and presents many challenges, among which are changes in food, living conditions, finances, learning styles and language (Wu, Graza, & Guzman, 2015).

It is clear that overseas students potentially go through difficulties in adapting to this new environment and consequently they may be subject to loneliness, depression, and possibly increased health problems, both mental and physical (Pedersen, 1995). It has been found that once international students can adjust to these new stresses and difficulties, they are likely to show improvements in their academic performance and also show more stability in their health. More importantly, when dealing with mental health issues, a suitable set of actionable steps, otherwise known as coping strategies, can be carefully implemented and adjusted to match specific psychological needs (Al-Azzi and Chiodo, 2006); coping is regarded as being able to accurately adjust regarding both external as well as internal demands that go beyond an individual's resources (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). In developing successful coping behaviours, students will be able to adapt to obstacles and reduce levels of stress (Ranta, 2009). Types of coping may include problem-focused strategies by trying to deal with the problem or emotion-based by trying to reduce the responses caused by stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It has been found, however, that there are cultural differences in the types of coping strategies used (McCarty et al., 1999); consequently more studies of the various cultures would be appropriate in order to have a better understanding. Americans for example adopted behavioural coping e.g., adapting behaviour to cope with stress, while Asians used a cognitive coping style e.g., putting problems into perspective (Rokach, 1999). Taylor et al (2004) noted that European, American and Asian students under stress were inclined to seek support from their families. Asian cultures may also not seek out professional help but choose to use more passive, unhelpful coping strategies, for example avoidance or repression (Bjorck, Cuthbertson, Thurman, and Lee, 2001; Leong & Lau, 2001; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

Overall, a large number of coping behaviours exist. How often and, more specifically, which coping behaviours are utilised by an individual is largely influenced by their cultural background. Coping behaviours differ from culture to culture. This is because of the effect of culture on an individual's view of what is acceptable or not. Coping behaviours are typically either emotion-focused or more problem-focused; the subset under which an individual's coping behaviours will fall is influenced by their culture. A look into a particular stressor, migration, shows that the migrant's response to this stressor, their coping behaviour while undergoing the process of migration, will be dependent on the culture of the region they are leaving. Various factors make the process of migration stressful, but the migrant should

employ healthy coping behaviours to ensure their well-being. In time, as the individual gets immersed in the new culture, there will be a decreased reliance on these coping methods.

There are not only cultural differences in the way individuals react to stress, as Wang and Miao (2009) argue that personality traits are predictors of coping styles; those who used more mature coping styles (for example, understanding problems and dealing with them in order to find a solution) had better mental health compared to those who used immature coping styles (for example, understanding the problem but not managing to find a solution). Immature coping styles were indicative of people who found it hard to deal with problems. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) find that individuals tend to use different coping styles depending on the stressful situation. There could even be gender differences; Carter, Bendell, and Matarazzo (1985) found that male students had a more mature approach in coping styles e.g. (dealing with problem) than the female students. However, the more passive coping strategies that many Asian cultures tend to use are often not the best ones for improving health outcomes (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2002). Indeed, the wrong choice of coping behaviour can actually lead to increased levels of stress (Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979; Williams & Berry, 1991). It has been reported that many international students have disclosed a number of mental health and psychosocial issues, for instance anxiety, going through stress and suffering from depression, but the problems also include loss of appetite, tiredness and trouble sleeping (Lin & Yi, 1997; Mori, 2000), all of which can have a negative effect on both the experiences of overseas students and academic performance. Moreover, this can be assumed as a complex issue, and one which deserves further investigation, given the numbers of international students studying abroad.

This chapter presents some of the main challenges that international students coming to the United Kingdom for study are likely to encounter in adjusting to their sojourn in the country. It discusses the factors that impact on international students adjusting, compares to the resident students to a new way of life, and then introduces the aims and objectives of this current study in exploring coping strategies of university students in the UK.

1.2 The main definitions relevant to this study

1.2.1 Overseas students in the UK

According to Lillyman and Bennett (2014), international students are defined in this study to be those already registered at a credible education institute level within their overseas

countries. The UK has a number of internationally recognised universities (QS Top Universities, 2016), so it is inevitable that there exist large numbers of students from around the world who are inclined to come to Britain to further their education. Approximately 18% of all the students in British higher education came from outside the UK in 2012-13, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2013). Many of the global market of international students choose the UK, whose market share between 2011 and 2014 has remained steady at around 11%; the only country attracting more students was the USA with a 22% market share (ICEF, 2016). Bearing in mind the differences in population and number of universities in the two countries, on a pro-rata basis the UK seems to be leading in this respect. The statistical release from HESA (2014-15) indicates a 1% overall increase in overseas students arriving in the UK in 2014 (see Table 1.1), indicating the UK is continuing to be an attractive destination, especially for the Chinese with a year-on-year 3% increase, those from Hong Kong with a 10% increase and a 7% increase from Singapore (Table 1.2). The nationality of student arrivals may be changing but the numbers continue to come. For example, Chinese students made up almost a fifth of the total of international students in the UK for 2014, exceeding all other nationalities, whereas the Indian students showed a drop on the previous year. Political reasons may also influence the flow, as countries develop new relationships and encourage their young people to participate in quality education available globally. Although China provides the highest number of students abroad, with a total of 712,157 in 2013, Saudi Arabia is the sixth largest exporter of international students with 73,548 students studying outside their own country in 2013 (UNESCO, 2016).

However, the increase in numbers coming to the UK has not been as much as anticipated and this has been partly attributed to global competition, as well as to UK immigration policy, which has made it more difficult for those outside the EU to obtain study visas (Spencer-Oatey, Dauber, and Williams, 2014). In addition, economic and political issues across the northern parts of Africa and in the Middle East have had an influence on university applications from those areas. Due to the strong competition for international applicants from native English countries such as Australia as well as the United States, more attention is now being paid to ways of attracting such students. Consequently, there has been a raised awareness of the diversity of student needs, the ways in which those needs should be met, and how the research has been conducted to improve knowledge and strategy. Since international students are ethnically and culturally diverse, coming from various countries around the world, their needs vary.

This means that universities must take into consideration the diverse needs of their international students in order to continue attracting them to the UK. Students need to be happy with the value of the knowledge they are receiving from their university study, and it is therefore of concern that 24% of the complaints about Higher Education were from international students (Welikala, 2015). With the widespread use of social media among students, complaints about universities can have a serious impact on potential applicants (Schulmann, 2014). It is therefore in the interests of Higher Education establishments that they try and make the student experience as positive as possible for their international students. This means that they need to take note of any possible issues that such students may encounter, and which may make their visit a less than happy experience.

Table 1.1 International students in UK HE, 2014-15

All non-UK domicile in HE	EU	Non-EU
Postgraduates in England	36695	130885
Postgraduates in Wales	1685	9930
Postgraduates in Scotland	6505	16345
Postgraduates in N.Ireland	1345	1100
TOTAL Postgraduates	46230	158265
Undergraduates in England	58925	130310
Undergraduates in Wales	3740	8875
Undergraduates in Scotland	14300	12860
Undergraduates in N.Ireland	1385	1695
TOTAL Undergraduates	78345	153745

Source: HESA 'Students in Higher Education 2014-2015'

Table 1.2 Top non-EU students coming to study in the UK universities

Country	2014-15
China (PRC)	89540
India	18320

Country	2014-15
Nigeria	17920
Malaysia	17060
United States of America	16865
Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region)	16215
Saudi Arabia	8595
Singapore	7295
Pakistan	6080

Source: HESA First Statistical Release (2014-15)

1.2.2 British students

Generally, in Higher Education in the UK, the term ‘British student’ or ‘UK student’ refers to those who pay a lower rate of tuition than those considered to be international students (Strand, 2012). This is because they are British citizens settled in the UK, and therefore partially funded by the government. With a mixture of international and UK students at university, British students may enjoy the celebrations of integrated cultural events and experiences and are exposed to a variety of different global cultures (Lillyman & Bennett 2014; Strand, 2012).

1.2.3 Mental health

The World Health Organization (WHO) governing body defines mental health as a state of psychological health to be aware of an individual’s well-being as they realise what their own capabilities are when dealing with everyday, normal strains of life, possessing the ability to work efficiently and productively, and being more than capable to contribute in the their community. In addition, the encouraging aspect of mental health that was defined by the WHO is: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2014, N.1). This takes into account a holistic approach to health, which now includes mental wellbeing; there is recognition that mental health is just as important as physical health (Manderscheid et al., 2009). However, there is debate on the use of the term ‘mental health’, as many still associate this with mental illness, which has negative connotations. A survey conducted by Manwell et al. (2015) found no consensus on defining mental health, but there was general agreement that mental health was

mainly centred on an individual's capacity and ability in interactions with society; this means that mental health may involve individuals choosing to disconnect from society.

1.3 Problems and Adjustment

Previous studies have shown the various academic, emotional and social problems that international students may encounter (Aubrey, 1991; Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003). The feeling of being excluded, not accepted, or misunderstood by home students and the local community can weaken the process of acculturation and may eventually lead to a number of emotional issues (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). The limited interactions between international students, local students and the academics may present both sociocultural and language barriers which may then impact negatively on the success of their academic achievement (Mori, 2000; Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006). While there appears to be no comparison between the levels of psychological issues in both home and international students (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011), there have been found areas of stress whereby there are specific in detail to the adjustment process of international students (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). The way in which students cope in response to these stressors may have a significant impact on their health, and may also have a negative effect on their academic success, as well as on their personal lives in the UK.

When travelling from one country to another, in particular to one that exhibits a substantially different culture, clearly encompasses many changes in lifestyle, in this case, some elements of mental distress and the methods used to help mitigate this specific change strongly includes coping strategies that are more likely to be anticipated. Studies show that successful coping strategies can influence positive adaptation, in helping to reduce psychological distress, and by providing a feeling of psychological or emotional well-being, as well as an developing much needed improvements within academic practices (Daroelman, Looi, & Butler, 2005; Mori, 2000). Although Ward (1997) suggests that maladaptive coping strategies can have serious concerns for an individual, as he claims that there are other kinds of adjustment that can affect an international student; psychological adjustment is not the only form to have an impact on the wellbeing of international students.

In addition, the allowance of sojourner and completion of regular everyday tasks greatly involves a positive effort and adaptive behaviour to a new environment, psychologically, socially, and emotionally (Omusi, 2013). These tasks are all those that allow someone

competently and confidently within. Kim's theory based on adaptation of cross-cultural engagements between individuals (Kim & Gudykunst, 2005) suggests that there is a process through which sojourners must go in order to adapt to a new culture. This can be determined as sociocultural adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999), and can be considered within a social learning parameter, whereby adaptation can be viewed in a manner that recognises change from the knowledge of social difficulties that students encounter to knowledge of social competence they gain. According to Ward and Kennedy (1999), the psychological and the sociocultural domains of adjustment are interwoven but nevertheless distinct; each is associated with different variables and develops in different ways over a period of time. The evaluation of sociocultural adaptation focuses on social competences and challenges, while any evaluation of psychological adaptation is more involved with the measurement of well-being; this can also include negative conditions such as depression.

It is therefore important to address the social issues that students may have, as these may be more visible and may also lead to psychological issues if not addressed. The concern of universities may be on academic achievement, but they also have a responsibility for the pastoral care of international students, who may also be away from their familiar surroundings for the first time in their lives. The difference between home students and non-home students seen within this respect, whereby the overseas students are also confronted with life values and customs that are outside their experience; therefore there is a greater responsibility on the part of universities to consider these issues (Zhao, Kuh & Carini, 2005). It is possible that Higher Education establishments may be able to put in place certain safety nets so that international students find it easier to adjust to their new environment. Some of these may be simple adjustments such as preparing students both before and upon arrival (Wu et al., 2015), by measures such as provision of the International students with a handbook on living and studying in the United Kingdom.

1.4 Factors influencing Adjustment

Among the variables that may impact the international students' ability to adjust to their new cultural environment include key variables, such as differences between the student's home culture, traditional values and the new culture they are exposed to, their age, the level of language proficiency, level of education, their gender, self-esteem, and previous experience of living in another country (Andrade, 2006; McDermott & Pettijohn, 2011). In addition,

there are other determinants such as how long they stay in the host country, the information and support provided by those around them, social interaction with local people, networking with other students from the same culture, their academic performance and also their physical health (Church, 1982; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 1997). It is clear that many of these variables interact with each other; the longer a student is in the country, the more they are exposed to the culture and the language, as well as to social networks. Jindal-Snape and Rienties (2016) argue that it is the responsibility of host universities to provide such opportunities for students to develop such social networks, as they suggest this is a factor in building resilience.

Length of stay plays another significant factor when going through the needed steps of adjusting to the new environment, as international students tend to relax more into the new culture over time, once they become more familiar with their surroundings. Some have argued however, the process may not be one gradual improvement over time. Adler (1975) suggested that sojourners would go through various stages to adjust to the host culture that they are exposed to. These stages include the initial period of excitement and elation followed by a period of discomfort as the realisation of living in a different culture becomes clearer and a final independence stage when a moderate amount of assimilation takes place, whereby integration into the host country's culture has been achieved. In response to this specific stage of transition, Ward et al. (2005) and Ward and Rana-Dueba (1999) saw the most important challenging barriers as well as difficult cultural encounters for adjustment (both psychological and socio-cultural) that contribute an effect during their length of stay. Moreover, these international students were exposed to in their new environment. Interestingly, socio-cultural problems decrease and level out gradually, but psychological distress reveals a different arrangement of the key measurable factors over time. The duration of the stay can also influence an international student's sense of well-being.

The difference or similarity between the international student's home cultural values and the host country's culture can affect adjustment. (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2005). If there is a wide distance between the two cultures, then it may be more difficult to adjust. A set of four dimensions defined by Hofstede (1980) has been based on a system of cultural classifications: these include 'Power Distance', a concept which states that there is an agreement by the powerless in a society where power is unequally distributed;

‘Masculinity/Femininity’ including competitiveness vs. nurturing; To define, ‘Uncertainty Avoidance’, a tendency to be vulnerable by those who are un-identified; and ‘Individualism/Collectivism’, which states the attention should be on oneself and own tasks as opposed to focus on loyalty to family and friends. These will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

Religious problem solving is another variable particularly pertinent to many international students, given that they are often from an Islamic background. A survey by Gilby, Ormston, Parfremment, and Payne (2011) estimated that 18% of the international students in the UK were Muslim. As this study has a focus on Arab students, who are mainly Muslim, religion was therefore a factor that needed to be explored. Pargament et al. (1988) have identified three styles of religious problem solving: these are being collaborative (in partnership with God), self-directing (taking responsibility on own) or deferring (where God makes the decision), and these have further been validated in Fox, Blanton and Morris’s (1998) study. Collaborative coping has been associated with lower rates of depression (Gall, Miguez de Renart, & Boonstra, 2000), self-directing religious problem solving with more personal control, but deferring has been negatively linked to personal control and self-esteem (Hathaway & Pargament, 1990; Phillips, Pargament, Lynn, & Crossley, 2004). Most studies on religious coping, however, have been related to Christianity (Pargament, Feuille, & Burdzy, 2011), although there has been one study conducted on Muslim university students (Khan & Watson, 2006). There is consequently a need for further studies on other religions, given the predominantly Western perspectives on religious coping.

Another important variable is how much the international student interacts with the host country, as stronger social interaction has been seen to enable a more positive process of adaptation (Lin et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2015). Such examples of social engagement have been mainly derived from the understanding of sharing and being exposed to the host society culture (Caligiuri, 2000). Church (1982) has identified the following factors, which contribute to the probability of these occurrences; whereby communication that involves verbal dialogue plus other types of communication that might be non-verbal which demand speaking and listening skills, traditional outlooks of culture and awareness of different stereotypes, cultural acceptance and developing friendships. On the contrary, a lack of communication skills might

affect the individual's ability to building friendship in a new society, where self-esteem, anxiety and lack of confidence act as issues that block these opportunities.

It may be a challenging process for international students to interact with the host nationals but it does bring its rewards, as it gives them the opportunity of finding out more about the new culture (Li & Gasser, 2005). In studies about sojourners, it has consistently been found that social involvement between them and those from the host culture is low, even though the sojourners would prefer to have more interactions (James & Devlin, 2001; Daroesman et al., 2005).

However, there has been another form of social engagement that has interested researchers which greatly involves social interaction with the same cultural network (Carr, Koyama, & Thiagarajan, 2003; Church, 1982). Such networks are perceived as being greatly acceptable situation as well as presenting a lack of stress when implementing their own plans to provide students with a sense of security, social support, and connection with others. Nevertheless, this has also met with some opposition, as Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2008) and Shi (2011) suggest that such networks may create barriers and prevent international students from acquiring the support they really need.

Both government and institutions have responded to the needs of international students. The large and diverse numbers of international students in the UK is constantly changing, but it is really crucial for the government bodies and educational providers to monitor such changes. Information about the population of overseas students is published annually by the British government in its higher education statistics collection (HESA, 2014). It also provides detailed statistics regarding the amount of satisfaction each of the students held for their course, while also including valued information from the Graduate Destination Survey and Course Experience Questionnaire which revealed future graduation prospects that each of the students could develop their skills from. For educational institutions to remain competitive and to attract international students to their campuses, it is important for them to monitor the needs and satisfaction of the student's experience (HESA, 2014).

As students approach the end of their studies, they are encouraged to participate in a national student survey of students on their experiences of the university, with the main concern on

academic difficulties, but also looking at cultural, personal and social difficulties (National Student Survey, 2016). Although the sector wide satisfaction rates for international students was 75%, it shows there is still a gap in expectations and fulfilment; in some universities, such as Newcastle, the satisfaction rating for assessment and feedback was below average, at 71% (Newcastle University Students' Union [NUSU], 2016). To seek responses from all students, surveys such as the quality of university's administrative and support services for students are included in the cyclic evaluation process. These surveys clearly identify overseas and resident students' perceptions as being distinguishable (Daroelman et al., 2005). There is other institutional research which extends knowledge regarding the specific needs of the international student and knowing what the best approaches are to addressing their needs. However, the aim of such research has increasingly been concentrated on students' academic requirements. There has been little attention to the sociable needs of overseas students, yet this is seen to be a contributing factor to academic success. If students are happy, then they tend to have improved chances of academic results (Lyubomirsky, 2005). Much research has been carried out on happier employees performing better (Gilbert, 2009) and being more productive, due to a relationship between people's mental health as well as the performance outcomes of humans (Oswald, Proto, & Sgroi, 2014). Further research has shown that the same applies in the educational sector, where it has been found that emotions can significantly influence achievement (Pekrun, Goetz, Wolfram, & Perry, 2002). It is therefore beneficial to students and the universities to ensure that the well-being of international students is addressed.

1.5 Social Support

Migration, and people moving countries and cultures, is now seen as a major social issue. This is particularly relevant to Europe, but it is also affecting the UK. As the conflicts in the Middle East continue, there are more and more migrants displaced from their homelands and forced to flee to other countries. Once they arrive, however, it is necessary to adapt to the new culture. This is a time consuming process and can be difficult, especially if the new culture speaks a different language. Children are especially affected as the UK is committed to ensuring that all children have the right to be educated, under the United Nations Convention specifically regarding the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989). However, it is may be more difficult initially for refugees to access higher education, because they are not able to afford the fees; once they are given refugee status, then they are eligible for the same fee

remission as the home students (Amnesty International, 2013). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2016) estimates that less than one percent of all refugees globally have access to higher education and the importance of university education for young refugees should not be underestimated as these young people are the future leaders of their countries, currently in conflict (Watenpaugh, Fricke & King, 2014; WENR, 2015). Migrants are finding assistance via social support in assimilation (Lu, 2012); the assimilation process causes strain on migrants physically, psychologically, and socially but social support systems help ease migrants into their new surroundings. Social support helps alleviate stress, produces feelings of stability and self-worth, and provides relationships. Immigrating into a new country also puts a strain on the family and social support is needed to help family members adjust individually and as a unit.

Migrating and assimilating produces many avenues of stress which differ between men and women. Men are said to develop stress mainly from work-related issues whereas women tend to develop stress from handling issues that arise within the family (Lu, 2012). It has also been found that three core causes of stressors due to immigrating are uncertainty concerning the future, distress from the lack of job, and exclusion from the new society (Msengi, Arthur-Okor, Killion, & Schoer, 2015). Social support helps decrease the effects of these stressors by offering emotional support. This is seen when extended family members migrate with the family and assist with daily stressors (Lu, 2012). Social support groups can assist in validating the migration process and producing positive coping mechanisms (Msengi et al., 2015).

Extended family members reduce stress in migratory families by providing emotional support and instrumental support. Extended family cohabitating in the migrant household often take on the daily responsibilities of the absent migrant in assisting with daily family responsibilities (Lu, 2012). These family members also offer instrumental support in the form of finances, offering initial accommodations to the migratory family, assistance with the immigration process, and assisting with organizing the necessary documentation (Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2016). Social support is a needed resource to immigrants to assist them in assimilating in a psychologically healthy way. By feeling less alienated and more assimilated a migrant will have reduced personal and family stress which in turn will reduce the amount of depression they are feeling (Suarez-Orozco, Birman, Casas, & Vasquez, 2012).

Those immigrating with extended family members have an advantage over those who do not have the in-home social support. Negative psychological impacts of immigrating generally do not manifest immediately but over time, usually one to three years (Lu, 2012). Conversely, families with extended family members have depressive symptoms reduced by half over families who do not, as Lu points out. Without an in-home social support system such as extended family immigrants would need to rely on outside social support or else they will likely develop depressive symptoms, as well as other physical and psychological issues, the longer they are away and living in the new country.

Many immigrants experience psychological issues during the immigration process due to several factors such as losses due to leaving their home country, the inability to successfully resettle in a new environment, nostalgia and other psychological problems, grief, mourning, helplessness, anxiety, depression, and pessimism (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2016). These negative feelings continue until the migrant is able to increase their sense of self-worth. Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, and Ward (2016) told of one immigrant who claimed that they felt inadequate and suffered from depression until they were able to find a job in their new country; as Maydell-Stevens et al. observed, without being able to feel that were valued, they suffered from negative psychological issues. Furthermore, society at large tends to undervalue immigrants leading many to believe that they are at the bottom of the social structure in their new country and that their only value is to be used by the local established citizens, according to Maydell-Stevens et al.

Migrants' self-worth is often increased from the use of social support. Feelings of self-worth were increased after a social support group allowed immigrant women to trade recipes from each member's respective homeland, opened their meetings to the general public to further integrate the group, and allowed their different cultures to be shared (Msengi et al., 2015). The use of scheduled meetings and group activities helped migrant women from multiple backgrounds to feel included and of value in their new surroundings, according to Msengi, Arthur-Okor, Killion, & Schoer (2015). It has also been shown that while migrant adults tend to create friendships with other members from the same original country, migrant children adopt the new culture faster helping younger immigrants not feel a lack of self-worth like older migrants do (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2012).

If a migrant feels that they belong to a social group outside the main branches of society they may perceive themselves as unwanted or unvalued and can lead to feelings of prejudice and

discrimination (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2012). They found that those belonging to the group feeling like “outsiders” can develop feelings of inclusion via social support by either creating or identifying as a common “in-group” thereby reducing prejudice. This can be a difficult process as even though many migrants were able to successfully assimilate and earn back their sense of belonging, others were never able to resolve this personal loss (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2016).

While the inclusion of extended family members helps a migrant family transition (Landale, Thomas, & Van Hook, 2011; Wilkening, Pinto, & Pastore, 1968), each immigrant needs to develop relationships with the local population in order to feel included in society. Likewise, family members who are left behind also develop physical and mental health issues. For example, parents and spouses left behind by a primary wage earner and caregiver were more likely to develop hypertension and depression (Lu, 2012). Lu also found that women were likely to develop these symptoms more frequently than men who were left behind, possibly from established gender norms. By using social support groups, immigrants can develop relationships with others and have an easier time becoming assimilated into the new society.

Migrant adults need to form positive relationships with other local adults to succeed in their new environment, but it is also crucial for migrant children to develop such relationships. In addition to challenges in learning a new language and applying established learning skills to a new school in a different country, migrant children who do not develop positive relationships with other students and teachers struggle with feeling a sense of belonging, social involvement, motivation, attendance, academic engagement, and achievement (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2012). They found that a sense of belonging for migrant children has an impact on their psychological health, making it equally important that migrant children find social support as older immigrants do.

Both parents and children can have a difficult time adjusting to their new lives, making life at home strained. This arises from the immigration process as a whole, losing their sense of belonging and self-worth, and can also be from having to leave primary and extended family members behind. Even if the parents and children are adjusting to life outside the home it can still be difficult for them to relate to one another. For instance, it can be difficult for the parents to relate to their children’s schoolwork beginning with language and communication barriers and extending to the relationships the parents have with the teachers (Suarez-Orozco

et al., 2012). They argue that many parents can feel embarrassed at including the teachers on the full details of their circumstances and details of the family's life.

A family may not migrate to the new country together and children may be left behind as well as the spouse. Many migrant families tend to split the family in an effort to increase household wages; both adults may be working in different countries while keeping crops and Lu (2012) found that children left in the country of origin are likely to develop poor mental health. Just as those migrating would need to develop relationships outside of the family to remain emotionally and psychologically healthy, those left behind would also need to develop new relationships.

Social support assists immigrants with their mental health, feelings of stability and self-worth, offering relationships, and helps individuals and families as whole adjust to their new lives (Sosa & Zubieta, 2014). In the immigration process it is paramount that adults and children find a support system, either in the home in the form of extended family or outside the home in support groups and relationships (Msengi et al., 2015). Without a form of social support migrants both young and old both face increased risk of evolving mental and physical health ailments such as depression, stress, and anxiety. It is equally important that those family members left behind also find social support as they are equally likely to develop the same symptoms once primary bread winners and/or spouses leave them behind as they migrate for work. The immigration process is an exhaustive one that takes a physical and emotional toll on those that move and those that stay behind and unless healthy relationships are able to be defined it will lead to those participating in the process to suffer health issues (Salinero-Fort et al., 2011).

1.6 Migration and Mental Health

When establishing a better understanding of migration, it is defined in this context as people moving to a new area in order to find employment or to improve their life chances. However, as outlined in a review article by Bhugra (2004a), migration happens for many more reasons than those specified by this definition. It may occur for the purpose of marriage, avoidance of political or religious persecution, or to study, to name a few. Because it happens for such a multiplicity of reasons and involves a variety of experiences, the process of migration is described as being heterogeneous, and as a result of its heterogeneity, the experiences faced after migration are usually quite different from those faced before migration. The nature of

migration can also vary vastly. It can be temporary or permanent, national or international, recurrent, or seasonal. It may also occur over several generations as a continuous stream, or just once within the same generation. As a result, the psychological and biological implications and effects migration has on the migrant, as well as to the individuals within the area that the migrant has relocated to, are dependent on various factors, such as the scale, nature, and reason for the migration (Bhugra, 2004b).

Recently, a sharp rise of migrants over the years has occurred and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2016) reports that in 2015 a total of two hundred and forty five million people, comprising slightly over three percent of the world's global societies, lived away from their native country. Mass migration in Europe is not a new phenomenon. Migrants experience several complex changes during the process of migrating; almost everything about the migrant changes, including their diet, climate, family, culture, language and status. All the people who make the decision of migrating experience affective loss, but they hope to find better prospects in the place where they are migrating. The migration experience is a psychosocial process of change and loss. The migration process is comprised of seven griefs or losses; language, culture, friends and family, own home, lack of ethnic group, loss of social identity, and exposure to physical risks (Carta, Bernal, Hardoy, & Haro-Abad, 2005). These griefs's increase when migration takes place under adverse conditions and can cause psychological stress. Rechel, Mladowsky, Ingleby, Mackenbach, and McKee (2013) report that, when they first arrive in the country, most migrants are relatively healthy compared to the residential population; however, this good health decreases over time in the receiving society. Systematic reviews carried out across European countries and studies conducted in the UK reveal that there are higher rates of anxiety and depression among migrant populations (Kerkenaar et al., 2012; Rask et al., 2015). Articularly vulnerable groups include women and children and this can be attributed to various factors such as sexual and physical abuse during trafficking, according to Jayaweera (2011).

The process of migration can be a very stressful one. The article by Bhugra (2004a) explains that if a group of individuals migrate together, it is highly likely that they will have support systems travelling along with them. Conversely, if a set of individuals are dispersed over far distances, it is likely that their social support will suffer, or dissipate. Studies have shown that the more social support one has, the less likely they are to suffer from symptoms of depression. When an individual migrates for the purpose of studying, they are leaving their

social support system behind. Also, the preparation that the individual undergoes for the process of migration will play a part in the outcome. The stress that accompanies migrating for studies will be of a different type than the stress that accompanies the other reasons for migration, for example marriage. It has been shown in prior studies that individuals who have high motivation and high expectations prior to migration, tend to have better psychological outcomes (Bhugra, 2004b).

Being able to cope with the stress of migration is vital in order to protect the well-being of the migrant. Negative effects on the well-being of an individual in relation to stress, occurs when that individual's coping abilities are overwhelmed by the amount of stressors present.

Migration has been shown in previous studies, to negatively correlate with the mental health and wellbeing of individuals, as well as to result in high stress levels (van der Ham, Ujano-Batangan, Ignacio, & Wolffers, 2015). Studies have shown that the most common coping techniques utilised by migrants are religious practices, cultural integration, and seeking social support.

The study carried out by van der Ham, Ujano-Batangan, Ignacio, and Wolffers (2015) sought to explore stress and coping strategies of migratory home workers from the other countries, such as the Philippines, while taking into account the temporary character and dynamics of the migration process. The temporary migration process was looked at in this study, as having three main phases: pre-migration, migration, and post-migration. The study revealed that the most stress that was experienced by these domestic workers, was during the period they were abroad. The most common stressors identified by the participants of the study were homesickness, financial issues, adjusting to a different culture, loneliness, and poor working conditions. These or similar stressors were amongst the set of stressors outlined in various other studies which explored migrant-related stressors (van der Ham et al., 2015). The coping strategies employed to deal with these stressors differed with the different phases of migration. It was found that during the pre- and post- migratory periods, coping strategies employed were mostly problem-oriented coping strategies, which included getting relatives to assist with the preparations made before migration, as well as securing financial resources. During migration, however, it was found that predominantly emotion-focused coping strategies were adopted; this set of coping strategies included engaging in religious activities, enduring the situation, and seeking social support. One suggestion for the differences in coping strategies employed was that there was a perceived lack of control by the domestic

workers during the migration process, which stemmed from their dependency on employers and isolated position. The study came to the conclusion that the phase-specificity and transnationality of stressors and coping responses should be considered when addressing the well-being of migrants.

1.7 Mental Health of Students

Migrants are made up of all different groups and one group that may be particularly vulnerable to stress is that of young people continuing their studies in a different country from their own. Health issues regarding mental wellbeing among university and college students is of increasing concern all over the world. Kadison and Digeronimo (2004) stated that there is a crisis in mental health care among college students in the United States. A task force was set up by the American Psychiatric Association so as to provide advice and encourage research on college mental health. Blanco et al. (2008) did a national epidemiological survey in the USA and the study revealed that approximately half of the college students who participated in the survey met the criteria for a psychiatric condition.

In the year 2000, the United Kingdom Psychiatric Morbidity Survey reported an increase in depression and anxiety among youth aged between sixteen and twenty-four years (Office for National Statistics, 2001). However, this survey did not clearly identify students in their study population. In 2003 and 2011, the UK Royal College of Psychiatrists predicted that mental disorders would increase because the British government encouraged more students from a wider society to attend university (Macaskill, 2012). They attributed this to increasing financial burdens on students due to reduced government funding to support them during their study period. There have been similar concerns about the mental health of students in Canada, Turkey, and several other countries and there has been a lack of data on the incidence of mental health problems among students in the United Kingdom, according to Macaskill.

Several factors may predispose someone to a mental disease. These factors may be social, genetic or biomedical. Ingram and Luxon (2005) give stress models which outline how biological, psychological, genetic and cultural vulnerabilities interact with stressors so as to increase the probability of a person developing mental illness. However, there are protective factors which may prevent a mental disorder. These protective factors include intelligence, academic achievement, temperament, high self-esteem and experiential factors such as good emotional and social support networks (WHO, 2012).

There is no doubt that students are subject to a number of stressors, as mentioned previously, and this can have an impact on psychological well-being, but university students represent a unique group where there are opportunities of studying this impact. The key issues that have an impact on students are integration (Tinto, 1987), the transition to new educational approaches (Lowe & Cook, 2003), adapting to new learning behaviours (Harvey, Drew & Smith, 2006), and finding a balance between study, social life and work (Whittaker, 2008). University students are mainly within the 18+ age group, which spans transition from late adolescence to adulthood. In addition, the high-risk period for the onset of mental disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar occurs in late adolescence and early adulthood which is just at the time these young people are entering higher education (Rapoport & Gogtay, 2011). There is therefore potential for mental health issues in all students entering university, both home students and international students, as they fall within this group at a higher risk of evolving mental disorders.

The mental health of international students is of particular concern, as they are subject to similar stressors as home students, but due to the added impact of differences in culture and language, they may be at even greater risk (Mori, 2000). In its report on the psychological health of international university students, the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2012) acknowledged the additional challenges such students faced in adjusting in both phases studying and living in the UK; they arrive in the UK with high expectations of academic success but their performance may not meet those expectations. Accessible support for these international students is, therefore, important. In a study of foreign students in the USA, Han, Cho, Kim, and Kim (2009) found that 27% of their respondents were not aware of any mental health support available to them. This may not be because such help was unavailable through the university, but may be because international students did not know where to look for such help. However, Zivin, Eisenberg, Gollust, and Golberstein (2009) also found that even though students knew they had mental health disorders, they did not receive any treatment. There are no obvious reasons as to why international students do not seek help when needed (Mesidor & Sly, 2014), but there is an indication that cultural mistrust may play a role (Duncan & Johnson, 2007). They may not feel comfortable explaining their problems to someone from a different culture, and be wary of the system of psychological health (Al-Adawi et al., 2002); (Sarfraz & Castle, 2002) ; however, it is also likely to be linked to social stigma, as Amri and Bemak (2012) explain. In their paper on Muslim immigrants in the

United States, they discuss how help-seeking behaviours are influenced by the stigma of psychological health in the Muslim community, which is why mental health services are under-utilised.

Overseas students come from different countries with a variety of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. They face several challenges in their adjustment to studying and living in the UK. Migrant students, therefore, face all the stresses that other students face coupled with some other stresses that are unique to them (Kosheleva, Amarnor, & Chernobilsky, 2015). They adjust to the academic environment without having access to usual support structures of family and friends. It is usually costly for migrant students to return home and so most of them visit home only once per year or even less often.

The UK academic system is mostly unfamiliar to migrant students, and this can increase the difficulties associated with the transition (Ryan, D'Angelo, Sales, & Rodrigues, 2010). Getting a UK university education is quite expensive and most at times it requires considerable sacrifice from both the student and the family. The migrant student is under constant pressure to perform and fears failure (Huhn et al., 2016). Due to their limited finances, migrant students are likely to be unable to afford satisfactory accommodation when compared to other students in the UK. There have been cases of migrant students even economizing on food, according to news reports (Meijer, 2016). They often have to find part-time work to supplement their income, and this may be more difficult because they are in competition with home students with better English language skills.

Migrant students also find it hard to be involved in a student organization, which sometimes seems not to welcome them. Alcohol plays a major role in social activities in the UK student population. Most of the UK migrant students have religious or cultural backgrounds that discourage and prohibit the use of alcohol, especially the Muslim students (Michalak & Trocki, 2006). This may inhibit their full participation in a wide range of social activities; a study involving Muslim students who are faced with situations of using alcohol in the US by Abu-Ras, Ahmed, and Arfken (2010) who argued that social causes were given as one of the most vital reasons for international Muslim students drinking. Holiday times may also create problems for migrant students who do not have the financial support to return home. The Christmas holiday is particularly difficult for these students as the weather may be unfriendly and unfamiliar with cold wintry weather and short days, and coping with different weather can affect mood in international students (Oluwafunmilola, 2012).

1.8 Rationale of this study

This present study seeks to examine mental health including coping strategies of international students studying at UK universities. Furthermore, it focuses on the challenges faced by international students compared to their resident counter-parts. The benefits of hosting international students do not, of course, pertain only to the UK but are important to most host countries. These countries see the economic, political, cultural, and academic benefits of hosting international students and, in many cases, they compete fiercely with one another to recruit these students to study in their institutions (ICEF Monitor, 2016). The global competition for international students is intense and so the motivation of these students and the way in which they make decisions are important for host countries and their institutions to understand. Based on international students' potential for academic success and professional influence beyond graduation, it is essential to study the psychological challenges that may hamper these individuals' productivity and negatively affect their mental health upon arrival in the UK (Poyrazli, 2007). Additionally, it is important to recognize the protective factors that allow for the maintenance of positive mental health outcomes.

It is therefore important to have an understanding of the issues faced in a country with different traditional values, languages barriers and cultures. The aim of the current study is to investigate the factors that could have an impact on international students' mental health, in addition to the adjustment strategies of international students in the UK. Having gained this knowledge, it is expected that realistic and achievable recommendations can be proposed that would further enhance the experience of international students at UK universities.

There are specific areas that need further exploration to gain more understanding of the issues and challenges involving international students and these have produced some research questions for this current study. Importance is visible to determine the influence of specific variables on psychosocial as well as mental health of students. These variables include areas already mentioned, such as adaptation and support, but also consider the influence of age and finance, taking into account that each of these areas can have an impact on individuals. Another important variable is to find out how religion may affect international students in the UK, given that for many, their religion plays a significant part in their lives. All of these factors are explored within the context of stress, mental health and coping strategies.

There may be times when students are not able or willing to discuss their concerns about mental health. That is why metaphor analysis is used to identify potential signs of stress, coping strategies and flexibility. Interviews are thus with international students to elicit metaphors as a means of identifying emotional responses. The use of metaphors allows a deeper understanding of attitudes that may not be voiced in interviews explicitly, and therefore offers more knowledge of a student's state of mind.

This study recruited the research participants (international and British students) from 10 UK universities; the reason behind the selection of these 10 universities was because HESA revealed that a higher number of international students can be found in these 10 universities (HESA. 2014).

1.9 Aims and objectives of this research

The overarching aim present within this current study is to explore the psychosocial and mental challenges of international students in the UK. In order to do this, four objectives have been determined:

1. To investigate the association and correlation between mental health and psychosocial variables amongst both international and British students at UK universities.
2. To investigate the relationship between mental health and the five following factors: social support, coping flexibility, adaptation, religious problem solving and coping strategies for both international and British students.
3. To examine the relationship between mental health and the seven following factors: social support, coping flexibility, adaptation, religious problem solving, coping strategies, acculturation and culture stress for international students only.
4. To discover the perceptions of international students in the context of their acculturation and culture stress while studying at UK universities.

1.9.1 Research questions

The main question for Studies I and II was: What are the psychosocial variables that can affect mental health among both groups (international and British students) studying in the UK?

There were then five sub-questions:

1. To what extent do gender, having children or not having children, and living with family or not living with family relate to international students' mental health, social support, adaptation, coping flexibility, religious problem solving and coping strategies, compared to British students?
2. What is the predictable association between the five independent variables (social support, adaptation, coping flexibility, religious problem solving and coping strategies) and the dependent variable mental health in both British and international students?
3. What is the predictable association between the seven independent variables (social support, adaptation, coping flexibility, religious problem solving, coping strategies, cultural stress and acculturation) and the dependent variable mental health in international students?
4. To what level can social support (moderator) affect the association between coping, religion and mental health in both British and international students?
5. To what level can social support (moderator) affect the association between culture stress, acculturation and mental health in international students only?

The main question for Study III was: How can metaphors be used by international students in describing their experiences and challenges in facing issues during their study in the UK?

1.9.2 The model for this study

Figure 1.1 illustrates all the objectives for the three studies (studies I, II, and III).

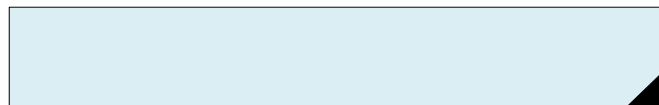


Figure 1.1 The framework for this study

1.10 Research design

Findings from two approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative, will help to achieve these objectives. A mixed methods approach will enable the findings from one approach, Study I, to inform Study II and then be triangulated with Study III, thus giving a deeper understanding of the issues. Perceptions elicited, especially through the use of metaphor analysis, will provide a unique perspective of the trials faced by these overseas students.

Evidently, the key objectives are to examine the relationship between mental health and a number of variables. These include social support, coping flexibility, adaptation, acculturation, coping strategies and culture stress; they will be explored with reference to disparities of gender, living with families and having children, both for international and British students.

There may be times when students are not able or willing to discuss their concerns about mental health. That is why metaphor analysis will be used to identify potential signs of stress, coping strategies, and flexibility. Interviews will thus be conducted with international students to elicit metaphors as a means of identifying emotional responses. The use of metaphors allows a deeper understanding of attitudes that may not be voiced in interviews explicitly, and therefore offers more knowledge of a student's state of mind.

1.10.1 Significance of the Study

The results found within this study will have a number of implications, including the experiences of international students in coping with stressors, support systems and counselling. It is vital to have more understanding of the factors that may influence the adjustment steps of international students, to improve their adjustment experiences, and make their experience of life at a UK university a memorable and enjoyable time for them. As the numbers of international students increase globally, there is a need to have a fuller understanding of the issues confronting them.

In addition, this study will provide more knowledge of factors where there is limited literature at present. A handful of credible studies that explore the link between acculturative stress, perceived social support and psychological well-being among international students in the UK; some studies have previously investigated whether social support systems can mitigate acculturative stress (Thomas & Choi, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003) and others have

examined the relationship between acculturative stress and depression as a predictor of mental health problems (Crocket et al., 2007; Lee, Koeske & Sales, 2004), but all these have predominantly been within an American context. Profoundly, this current research proposes significant contribution to the collective development of literature on international students coping with university life in a different cultural environment by investigating acculturative stress levels in the context of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, it will add to the knowledge of international students' use of religious problem solving by exploring this factor from the perspective of those from religious backgrounds other than Christianity; as Pargament, Feuille, and Burdzy (2011) recommended, there is a need for more cultural investigations of religious coping.

1.10 Thesis Structure

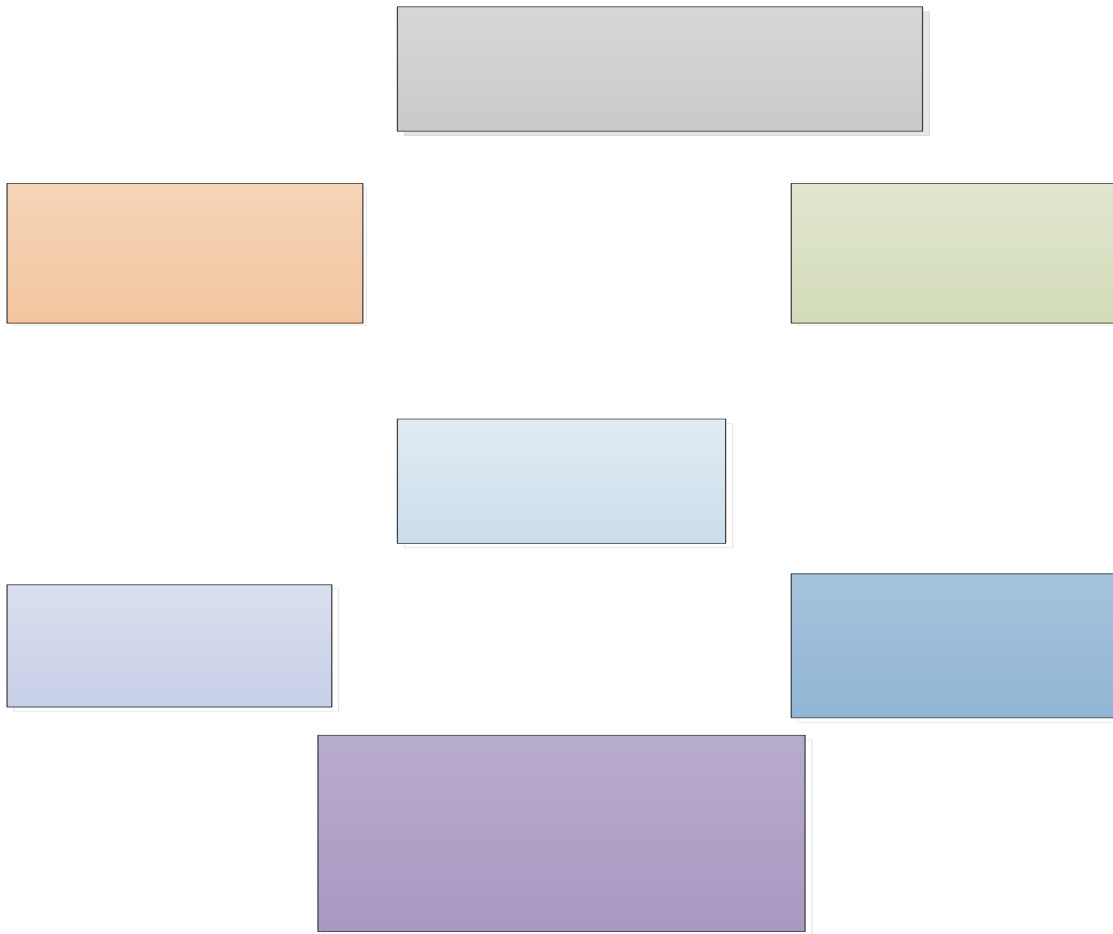


Figure 1.2 Thesis Structure

The researcher has divided the current dissertation into seven different chapters as shown in Figure 1.2 and as the following description details. This chapter (Chapter 1) has introduced the study and provided a realistic and justifiable reason for conducting the current study.

Chapter two is a review covering the literature and provides the context for the study. It discusses the issues that may arise for international students, which may lead to mental health problems. Ways in which these students deal with strategies to help them cope with some of these issues are reviewed. Despite the number of studies that have focused on international students, there are still areas that have not been fully explored, and a review of existing literature determines where this study may provide further knowledge.

Chapter three presents the theoretical framework within which this study is set. The framework is based on acculturation, psychological adaptation and moderating factors. This provides a defined setting for where this study may be placed within the theories relating to international students' issues.

Chapter four explains the methodology and approach used to collect the data for this study. It also presents the scales and questionnaires that were used in the quantitative study and the interviews and related procedure in qualitative study. Considerations for any ethical issues are also discussed.

Chapter five provides the findings of the first and second data collections and related analyses. This shows the variables involved in determining stress factors for these international students. It also looks at the hypotheses relating to the study and whether these are supported by the research findings.

Chapter six analyses the qualitative results of the interviews and explains the outcomes that will provide the key findings taken from the metaphor analysis. Through the use of metaphors the international students reveal their inner attitudes and thoughts of studying at UK universities. This is added to the perceptions they provide in interviews. In carrying out a qualitative study, more experiential data was available to explain and complete the quantitative findings. As Khawaja and Stallman (2011) explain, a qualitative study also helps to address some of the limitations of a quantitative study, in that it manages to capture lived experiences and provides more understanding of the diverse and complex ways in which individuals find effective coping strategies.

Chapter seven discusses all the results from both quantitative and qualitative findings and refers these back to existing studies within the theoretical framework. The chapter then concludes the study and discusses how the findings have answered the research questions. It makes recommendations based on the findings and suggests further studies which may expand this knowledge even more.

1.11 Summary

This chapter has put this study into perspective by explaining the rationale which has prompted further study in this field. It has outlined the necessity of better acknowledgments of the needs of overseas students in order to ensure that their experience of UK university life is positive. This is not only significant from the perspective of universities being able to attract such students to their establishments, but it may also have a substantial impact on academic success and mental health of overseas students. The current research therefore aims towards exploring the factors which may lead to stress in international students and prevent them from experiencing a rich and rewarding time in their lives. It further investigates the ways in which these international students find strategies to help them cope with such stressors and adapt to living in a new cultural environment. One of the important ways it does this is by the use of metaphors, which help to disclose some of the emotions international students feel about the challenges of living in a different culture. The following chapter will present a literature review on international students, coping strategies, and support systems.

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

An exploration takes place in the study of mental health and coping strategies of international students studying at UK universities. It has a particular focus on international students and the specific issues they are facing in a country with different values and culture. The main challenges facing international students were originally identified by Leong (1984) as being academic difficulties, personal concerns, and health issues. Since then, there have been a substantial number of other studies relating to international students, especially given the growth in this particular market.

Although the UK is an attractive study destination, there is a projection that the UK's market share will continue to decline as it is in such competition from other nations such as Canada, the US and Australia, all seeking to recruit the same high calibre students into Higher Education (British Council, 2015). One of the issues is whether foreign students are satisfied with the value of the experiences they gain from university as this has an impact on referrals and recommendations. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) in 2014 received complaints totalling twenty-four percent from overseas students (OIA, 2015), suggesting that not enough support is being given to these students to enable them to experience a quality provision and take home happy memories of their time in the UK. The issues most likely to affect international students are those of plagiarism, academic misconduct and cheating (OIA, 2015), and are often due to international students not being given sufficient advice. This can have an impact on the psychological wellbeing of international students as they are accused of irregularities, which they may be completely unaware of being unacceptable in UK universities.

It is only when interaction involves different cultures that values and attitudes or social behaviours begin to be questioned (Ward et al., 2005). This may result in what has been referred to as 'culture shock', when individuals find themselves facing challenges as they realise they have to deal with a completely unfamiliar environment (Bochner, 2003). The stress may lead to physical or emotional reactions; either of these reactions is likely to impede the process of adapting to the new society (Irwin, 2007).

This chapter reviews the literature relating to mental health and other associated factors and it then discusses how universities and international students deal with the challenges of adjustment. Such challenges are often identified by specific factors that cause stress and may include language, culture, and homesickness. Different adapting strategies are utilised to address the stresses experienced and these are described, exploring how context and culture may affect these. The chapter looks at the role of religion and social support, and discusses the use of metaphors. Finally the main points that have arisen in the discussion of this literature review will be summarised.

2.2 Defining mental health

There are a number of definitions relating to mental health, but it is generally recognized that good mental health is a state whereby individuals can deal with the ordinary stresses connected with living, and that they can make a positive contribution to their community (WHO, 2001). The term of being positive is also associated with an individual's state of mind, and enables them to feel safe and secure in their environment and relationship with others in their communities (Mind, 2013). Relationships are important in defining mental health as they indicate the significance of interactive activities in maintaining psychological wellbeing (Guo, 2009). On the other hand, when there is a deviance in this psychological stability, then it is regarded as a dysfunction in the individual and can lead to behavioural, psychological or biological symptoms (Stein et al., 2010).

Significant to mental wellbeing is resilience, or the way that an individual can deal with stressors that can occur in everyday life (Faculty of Public Health, 2010). The stress that individuals undergo in normal life is usually moderated by the ability to cope with the situation. This includes having the personal attributes to be in control of one's life and environment (Aked, Marks, Cordon, & Thompson, 2008). Mental and social wellbeing are closely linked, and each can have an effect on the other. Social relationships are therefore very important to mental health and mental wellbeing (Faculty of Public Health, 2010).

There has been much debate on factors that can lead to mental stress, and research into how individuals experiencing different situations cope with stress has shed some light on how various actions can affect our mental health (Bickford, 2005; Krantz, Whittaker, & Sheps, 2012; Schneiderman, Ironson, & Siegel, 2005). This research has been motivated by the correlation between stressful life events and mental or physical health (Thayer & Lane, 2009; Allan, 2012). These studies suggest that the existence and degree of stress, as measured by

life changes or stressful life events, directly affects the ability to make a sound judgment and deters one's conscious perception of activities around (Mane, Krishnakumar, Niranjana, & Hiremath, 2011). These factors result in poor physical and mental state, which eventually leads to poor mental health.

There has been a strong tie between social prevailing social conditions and an individual's mental health. Institutions and activities that take place in an individual's social circle determine day-to-day activities of that same individual. By examining changes in these day-to-day activities, one would easily label variables that could potentially influence the mental well-being of the individual. Causes of mental health disorder may be extrapolated from the different domains in the social setting. Factors such as peer pressure, family relationships, socialisation practices, and stigmatisation are a few examples of areas in the social circle that would potentially affect one's mental health (Overton & Medina, 2008; WHO, 2012). The key point is that most factors to be investigated should be dictated by the aspect of social life that is being probed.

Unavoidable life changing events that easily affect one's mental health are notably marriage and occupational roles. In the past decade, there has been an increase in divorces and people losing their jobs (Marcus, 2012); these ongoing strains within marital and occupational roles have shown that they have a considerable impact on the psychological health of those affiliated. Researchers point out that, since these two aspects of an individual's life form the base or anchor point of one's daily activity, a significant change in either one would adversely affect one's ability to handle daily activities (Nambi, 2005; Trivedi, Sareen, & Dhyani, 2009; Tunstall, Shortt, Pearce, & Mitchell, 2015). This would lead to disarray and confusion in one's mental state coupled with the emotional trauma that comes with losing one's job or a loved one. If coping procedures and tactics are not put into effect, the individual's mental state may deteriorate (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987).

A final key aspect of the social model is the notion that mental and emotional disorder is a normal byproduct of the society. This may be taken to mean that the very structures and events that make social life possible for most individuals create circumstances that are not favorable for others (Aneshensel, 2005). A good example is a capitalist society that is prone to unemployment. In such a setup, some individuals will always have to deal with the stress of unemployment. This implies that such a society will contribute to poor mental health for a

given percentage of its population regardless of efforts put in place to combat poor mental health.

Poor mental state that results in changes in the social state of an individual is, in most cases, viewed as a normal occurrence by society. This perception distinctly deviates from the disease model of medicine, in which mental disorder is viewed as abnormal (Aneshensel, 2005). Life changes that result in poor mental health are not taken with the seriousness they deserve and as a result, many do not follow up when one has undergone drastic negative changes in his or her social circle. Aneshensel argues that this has led to increasing in cases of mental disorder that result from life changes, and until there is more awareness of this, these cases will continue to rise.

Cottini and Lucifora (2010) created a study to analyse key variable relationships through the use of time series cross-sectional data collected from fifteen European countries, covering a link between mental health issues, contractual arrangements and working conditions.

Meanwhile, historical data was researched by the European Working Conditions Survey, which found the latest key associations in mental wellbeing while being in the workplace and evaluated how these are associated to numerous job characteristics (Parent-Thirion, 2007). This was a substantial study and presents significant results on the relationship between mental health linked with the workplace. There is evidence of a positive association between adverse work conditions and psychological distress (Cottini & Lucifora, 2010) and also a positive relationship in the interaction between work conditions and gender. Changes in the workers' rotation hours and conditions of work may result in a poor mental state, and due to mental fatigue and poor judgment, such stressful conditions may result in work-family imbalance (Andersen, 1995). This may also be relevant where international students are studying for long hours in university libraries, or taking on extra work to help with financial issues.

These areas clearly depict a relevant pattern of changes in a person's life and his or her mental health, in other words, a correlation is present between these two aspects. However, it is limited to negative changes in one's life and not a general change. Bearing this in mind, it would be justified to state that as long as one targets a positive life-changing event while monitoring the negative changes, he or she would more likely experience an optimal mental performance.

2.3 Historical background of mental health

Because of these obvious manifestations of dysfunctions, mental health is more often contrasted with mental illness, and discoveries by archaeologists indicate that as early as 5000BC, people were being treated for some forms of mental illness; this was because they found evidence of trepanning (Porter, 2002). It is thought that this was used to release what early civilisations thought of as evil spirits in an individual, and involved drilling into the skull to relieve pressure on the brain (Foerschner, 2010). Spirituality and religion have long been associated with mental illness. According to Koenig, King, and Carson (2012), the Hebrews believed that it was a punishment for sin and that priests could find cures by praying to God; there are also many early religious pictures that show holy figures casting out devils as mental illness was considered to be equated to sin (Zax & Cowen, 1976). Religion and psychiatry have been closely associated over the years and Ellis (1980) reported a causal relationship between religion and mental illness. There is therefore a negative association between mental illness and religion that appears to override cultural sensibilities.

The most significant advance in dealing with mental illness was through the works carried out by Sigmund Freud in the late nineteenth century. His clinical investigations led him to the theory that there were three levels to the mind; the conscious, the preconscious from which memories could be extracted, and the subconscious which often contained events that were too painful to acknowledge (Freud, 1915). It was believed that these subconscious thoughts needed to be extracted in order to confront dysfunctional behaviours (McLeod, 2013).

However, despite the advances that have been made in understanding mental health and mental illness, there is still a stigma attached to mental dysfunctions and many individuals are reluctant to seek help. Foerschner (2010) suggests this social stigma is common in societies where there are pressures to marry into good families. A number of people across the world, such as Arabs, are indeed ashamed of any form of mental illness and many believe that there is something supernatural about it, as Foerschner (2010) affirms. Mental illness may be perceived as a punishment from God in many Muslim communities (Abu-Ras, Gheith, & Cournos, 2008) and accepted as God's will (Hasnain, Shaikh, & Shanaw, 2008; Nabolski & Carson, 2011). Consequently they may consult traditional doctors about physical complaints, which are in reality often psychosomatic symptoms which they do not wish to acknowledge (Foerschner, 2010; Ahmad, & Riaz, 2007). There have been a number of studies showing that psychosomatic symptoms are culture-bound. Many are seen as neuroses of the East and have

often been misunderstood due to the context of diagnoses being Western-based (Bhugra & Jacob, 1997). Another aspect of this was seen when African students in Western education systems reported a variety of somatic symptoms, described as 'brain fog' (Jilek, 2001); these were ascribed to acculturative stress, where these international students were unused to learning coming from reading theoretical texts, and developed vision disturbances (Prince, 1960; 1985).

2.4 Mental health among international students

Students from Western countries have demonstrated that they possess stronger, more uplifting attitudes towards asking for help when going through personal mental health challenges, where they can express their experiences, than students from other parts of the world. This in part can be attributed to cultural attitudes towards mental health (Cheung, 1984; Suan & Tyler, 1990).

There is a possibility that international students may not even recognise that they have mental health problems as these may be closely linked to their emotional capacity in being able to deal with new and potentially stressful situations (Extremera, Fernandez-Berrocal, Ruiz-Aranda, & Cabello, 2006); emotions related to nostalgia and helplessness may be affected by their change of environment, where strong feelings of homesickness and loss of control may be felt to be normal. Nevertheless, the state of a student's mental health is a problem which may affect not only the student, but also their family, their fellow students and the university, according to Lin (2006) who found that Chinese students suffered much in adjusting to American universities. Students leaving their homes and family environment at a relatively young age to pursue educational opportunities in other countries are confronted with life adjustment stress, which in turn may influence their psychological health and academic performance (Chou, Johnson & Johnson, 2011). It is important to understand how international students deal with issues which may affect their psychological wellbeing, and how cultural values may play a role in the strategies chosen to cope with stressful situations (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000).

Such cultural values may relate to keeping negative issues hidden from the family, or not trusting medical help within the new culture. Schwartz (2004) has argued that there are specific cultural value dimensions and coping strategies are affected by these; they determined, for example, whether coping strategies were in the interests of the group or the individual. For many international students adhering to traditional group-based cultural

values, this may mean that they would not want their families to know that their new life in the host culture presents any difficulties.

There have been two main coping strategies which are consistent in the way they relate to cultural differences in how international students deal with situations in the UK (Bardi & Guerra, 2011). Coping by religion is much more likely to be a common practice amongst non-Western cultures (Connell & Gibson, 1997; Wahass & Kent, 1997) and is especially so for those from embedded group-oriented cultures, where they are expected to follow tradition and call upon God's help, according to Bardi and Guerra. Emotion-focused/avoidance coping is the other strategy, whereby some cultures are more predisposed to focusing on their emotional responses and avoiding the problem (Olah, 1995; Radford, Mann, Ohta, & Nakane, 1993). Bardi and Guerra suggest that these cultures are normally non-Western, where there is not such an emphasis on personal responsibility.

International students are more likely to ask for help from friends rather than university professionals (Mahdavi-Harsini, 1981) and seeking informal help from friends may be successful in reducing some of the negative psychological effects of stress (Constantine, Wilton, & Caldwell, 2003). However, reasons for not accepting help from professionals may become more problematic when the mental health issues escalate into more serious concerns. Pill, Prior, and Wood (2001) suggested that counselling was the preferred strategy for dealing with minor psychological disorders, but Oliver, Pearson, Coe, and Gunnell (2005) found that this was not a significant source of help. In identifying that international students are more likely to ask for support and help from friends, it may mean that different strategies need to be applied by universities. It is possible that there may be early signs to alert those who are aware of potentially more severe psychological problems, although these may not be identified by well-meaning friends. It is also important to take into consideration of the outcomes from research conducted by Oliver et al. (2005) that indicates that males including young individuals are least likely to seek help, even from friends. Foremost, it is obvious to see that a social stigma still exists when discussing mental health issues; there may be good reasons why international students do not wish to disclose any mental health problems.

The number of overseas students in countries worldwide is on the rise, as young people seek educational opportunities which may develop their own skills, knowledge and employability. They bring with them a wide range of perspectives and assets (Bevis, 2002; Harrison, 2002), but it must be recognised that they also face many challenges when attempting to adjust being

in a foreign culture. If they do not seek help in facing up to those challenges, then they need to find their own resources in coping with the stressors that such challenges may bring. One of the main challenges they must deal with is in being able to adapt to their new cultural environment. It has been suggested that many international students feel as though they are simply a guest in the new host community (Turner, 1994), and this may lead to them taking longer to feel part of that community; they may even have a sense of being unwelcome (Cuyjet, 1997). International students also tend to spend less time relaxing and socialising in their first year in the new environment (Zhao et al., 2005), although this may be the time when they most need the social support of peers, given that they are likely to be lonely (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006). It was also found that a sense of belonging had a positive impact on cross-cultural interaction, and it increased student achievement (Glass & Westmont, 2014).

It has been identified that academic difficulties caused one of the main challenges for those studying abroad (Leong, 1984). Further studies showed that language proficiency could affect student achievement (Mori, 2000), and a lack of confidence in the classroom also had a major effect (Ying, 2005). There is also the very human factor of homesickness that can have a significant effect on the international student.

Being homesick is explained as a type of anxiety that demands company from others and suffers from separation (Brewin, 1989) and is defined as the forever wanting for the familiarity of home (Schmitz, 1997). Estimates are that approximately 60 percent of students that start university in the first year undergo a feeling of homesickness to some extent (Brewin, 1989). In addition, it has also been seen to result in diminished satisfaction with the present surroundings (Stokols, 1983), loneliness, and difficulties with fitting into the new environment (Constantine et al., 2003; Stroebe et al., 2002). As discussed previously, homesickness can be caused directly as a result of culture shock (Ward et al., 2005). It is evident that homesickness can have a considerable negative impact on the psychological wellbeing of international students as other factors related to their academic studies are influenced by it, and in turn this makes students feel inadequate.

Feelings of inadequacy are often related to English language skills where international students may consider that they are at a disadvantage, compared to domestic students (Li & Campbell, 2006). It can also be because international students may perceive that they are considered inferior and therefore discriminated against (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Yeh &

Inose, 2003). When this is further impacted by feelings of depression and loneliness, then it can lead to further mental health issues.

Mizan and Hajiri (2014) discuss some of the risk factors that predispose migrants to mental illnesses; they may experience low levels of social support, and this may have an effect on their mental health status. Social support can be described as a perception whereby a person feels that they are well taken care of and that they are part of a social network that supports them. When individuals move countries, they leave behind a strong social network that they had built over the years (McKeon, 2014). They need more time to build such a network in the receiving country. Perceived discrimination may also affect the migrants' mental health status, as they feel they are outside such networks (Noh & Kaspar, 2003).

A survey conducted in the USA revealed that higher debt levels among students were significantly associated with higher stress (Sloan, 2016); financial stress is more common in young adults (Wrosch, Heckhausen, & Lachman, 2000). Students with higher financial debts were more likely to engage in health risk behaviours, such as drinking, substance use and insufficient physical activity leading to weight problems (Nelson, Lust, Story, & Ehlinger, 2008). They were also more likely to develop depression (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011).

Schizophrenia is one of the most prevalent psychiatric disorders globally (Bhugra, 2005). The peak age of its onset is late adolescence or early adulthood (Rajji, Ismail, & Mulsant, 2009). Students, therefore, may present a high-risk group. In an internet-based survey carried out in the United States, depression had a 15.6% prevalence rate among undergraduate students (Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein, & Hefner, 2007). Bipolar disorder also usually begins in early adulthood or adolescence (NIMH, 2016). Some epidemiological studies have revealed that exceptional intellectual ability may be associated with bipolar disorder (Gale et al., 2013; Smith, Anderson, Zammit, Meter, Pell, & Mackay, 2015). This places the student population at a high risk. Eating disorders such as bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa are common among university and college students, along with drug misuse (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011) and abuse of both prescription and non-prescription drugs has been associated with a higher propensity towards the development of mental disorders.

2.4.1 Differences between Arab and non-Arab students

There were found to be profound variations between Arab students and other international students in Australia. Whilst the majorities of Arabs are sponsored and have no desire to stay in a Western country permanently, many of the Asian students are self-funded and see their study in Australia as an opportunity for migration and their future (Shepherd & Rane, 2012).

Many barriers confronted students when they attempted to learn and improve their English language. These obstacles included their worries and lack of communication in the classroom with mixed genders, which might influence negatively on their progress in learning the new language. From this it may be concluded that students might try to avoid interaction with the other gender in their classes resulting in a lost opportunity for developing and improving their language processing skills. The study conducted by Alhazmi (2010) revealed that the biggest challenges encountered by Saudi students in Australia were in connection with the transition from gender-separated environments in their home country to co-educational institutions in the host country. This has also been an issue for Emirati students attending Western universities (Renn, Karafyllis, Hohlt, & Taube, 2015).

A research paper presented by Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000) concluded in their study that the majority of non-Arab students have little confidence in their verbal performance while studying in Australia. They suggested that living abroad with their families and children, coping, culture stress and language were the main challenges still faced by non-Arab students. However, the main language obstacle for Arab students relates not to verbal communication, but to written communications (Javid & Umer, 2014). Yet that is not to say that Arab students do not also face anxieties when faced with verbal communications in an English-speaking environment (Al-Sibai, 2005); this is especially seen in Arab women, when confronted with a mixed class, as they have been conditioned not to interact with males (Altamimi, 2014).

In addition, another study conducted by Lin, Wang, Lin, & Lee (2011) showed that many Far East and African students face several challenges involving copying flexibility and social support to adjust in the new surroundings. However, Al-Sibai (2005) found that non-Arab students adjust rapidly to the new environment when social support counseling works effectively and supports self-efficacy for the student to adjust; she recommends that Arab

students also need to find a way to adjust rapidly in order to be able to make the most of their opportunities.

Alazzi and Chiodo's (2006) study found that Arab students tended to identify personal events as stressful and dealt with such stress by treating the actual symptoms associated with this stress; this was supported by Schwartz's (1988) study of Saudi Arabian students, where he found Arab students responded to personal stress. Schwartz (1988) also found that Chinese students were more likely to find academic events more stressful, whilst American students were more stressed by interpersonal events, indicating that there are definite cultural divisions in perceptions of stress. Coping strategies such as religious support, and consulting family members and friends were used by the Arab students, but in many cases they managed to live by accepting their problem and finding solutions themselves (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). It can be seen that there are a number of strategies that can be predictive of psychological health, but that some of these strategies may be influenced by cultural preferences. This study is therefore setting out to explore the differences in these cultural approaches and to investigate areas where there may also be similarities. It can be concluded that the previous studies dealt with Arab and non-Arab students in terms of examining numerous psychosocial factors and their association with mental health with specific ethnic groupings; however, the current study addresses the comparison between international students and British students in investigating and exploring psychosocial variables in relationship with mental health.

2.4.2 British students

A recent survey carried out by the University of Southampton and Solent NHS Trust (Richardson, Elliott, Roberts, & Jansen, 2016) indicated that British students who experience financial difficulties and concern about debt have an increased probability of suffering from psychological problems. Additionally, the study showed that female British students demonstrate larger probability of suffering from mental health difficulties than their male counterparts, as well as having a higher probability of developing issues, compared to British male students. The study also linked depression, worry, and eating disorders as the three main difficulties that both genders encounter at different levels of study at university, today. Furthermore, the study revealed that concern has emerged in previous studies that British students are either not conscious of, or are failing to utilise, mental health services at their institutions. However, their study found 75% of the participants were aware of their university's counseling service that they could access and use.

Numerous studies carried out across a number of universities in the UK found that in female British students there are higher prevalence rates of depression than in male British students (Quince, Wood, Parker, & Benson, 2012). However, studies carried out by Spinhoven and Kooiman (1997), van Wijk and van Selow (1999), and Doherty and Kartalova-O'Doherty (2010) revealed that female British students are more likely to report psychological distress and physical impairment than their counterpart British male students; in addition, the females attempted to seek and benefit from medical help (Doherty & Kartalova-O'Doherty, 2010), although it is only rarely that gender differences have been recognised in illness behaviour. In their study, Piccinelli and Wilkinson (2000)), found that British female students did not reveal reporting moderate symptoms on the mental health measure, while (Piccinelli & Wilkinson, 2000) and Cantwell, Archer, and Bourke (1997) found that British students of both genders under-reported psychological symptoms. This may be due to lack of access to medical provision (Task Group, 2016). The current study deals with the comparison among international students and British students through an investigation between the psychosocial variables and mental health; much has been explored about British students or ethnic students, but few comparisons have been made.

2.5 Mental health and cultural differences

Depression is one of the main factors in mental illness and it has been claimed that almost half of all adults will experience some form of mental illness during their lifetime (Hughes, 2016). However, research indicates that traumatic events in people's lives can trigger depression (Kinderman, Schwannauer, Pontin, & Tai, 2013) and trying to deal with cultural differences can be traumatic for many international students. This is particularly so if students come from a culture that is notably different from their new host country's culture.

It has also been noted that cultural differences can bring their own form of academic stress, which affect various nationalities in different ways. Brown (2008) reports how Russian and African students do not have the same level of computer skills as the UK universities expect of them, and they consequently have to learn a new skill, along with their course work. This causes additional stress. Many students had never written academic essays before and did not know how to reference literature, although this was usually rectified within the early months of university attendance (Brown, 2008). Of more concern was the need for critical thinking, which many international students found a challenge, as they were used to learning by rote and did not know how to evaluate critically, with their work being more descriptive (Egege &

Kutieleh, 2004; Shaheen, 2012). Shaheen argues that international students are simply not taught to think creatively and analytically in their own cultures and, furthermore, have often been taught by unqualified teachers. However, Fell and Lukianova (2015) argue that critical thinking is not the only indicator of a learner's intellectual ability and that British academics should not judge international students solely on their critical thinking; they suggest that such skills can be taught but may take time for international students to reach a level when they can be compared to British students.

Where education is teacher-centred, students listen, while the teacher talks (Okorocha, 1996) and there is limited interaction in the classroom (Carroll & Ryan, 2005), so it is a stressful situation for students to find that they are expected to participate in discussions. The UK has a student-centred education system, where students are very much involved in expressing their opinion and engaging in debate (Gudykunst, 1998; Hofstede, 1991) and it has been claimed that such participation could present itself to be extremely challenging for international students (Persaud, 1993). Asian students are particularly reticent when confronted with classroom discussions and this is often attributed to embarrassment over poor language skills or lack of confidence (Ballard & Clanchy, 1997; Okorocha, 1996). However, in the UK there is much more interaction and participation involved in the classroom and many international students, more used to teacher-centred instruction, may find this intimidating. They may feel left out of discussions, and therefore lose confidence in their language abilities, even though their English language skills may be sufficient to participate.

In addition, many international students feel that they are challenged to accept responsibility for their own learning. Although some believe that autonomy is a Western cultural conception, and thus it seems to be unrelated to international students (Le, 2013), most agree that it is a useful skill for university-level students to have as it promotes quality of learning and motivation (Al Asmari, 2013). Others suggest that autonomous individuals are more prepared for coping with the demands that life may make on them (Mienaltowski, 2011). However, many of the international students arriving at UK universities have come from an educational background which restricts learner autonomy, due to delivery of highly structured programmes; such students are not used to making their own decisions on learning (Collins, 2008).

Campbell and Li (2006) in their New Zealand higher education study explored students of Asian descent and took time to understand their perceptions of collaborative learning

concepts in the form of working in a group and taking part in group assignments. The method adopted in this study critically discusses the contribution of 25 Asian students to an hour in the interviews. The findings in this particular study highlighted how Asian students thought it was unfair and unethical to expect them to produce more information than what they had received in the classroom; whereas they were used to memorising what they had been taught in class, they could not conceptualise learning as being an independent activity. This brought them into conflict with the lecturers, whose expectations were based on university students having independent study skills (Li & Campbell, 2006).

It can be seen that culture may have an impact on behaviours, which ultimately lead to stress and possible mental illness. However, culture may have an influence on the meanings that people attach to mental illness; it has been found that Asians may report somatic symptoms but ignore emotional symptoms, even though these emotional problems exist (Hwang, 2016; Lin & Cheung, 1999; Meyers, 2006). In a study on Arab perspectives towards mental health, Dalky (2012) found that mental illness was regarded negatively, with people reporting fear, embarrassment and loss of family reputations associated with having a family member with mental illness. An earlier study conducted in Oman found that people rejected genetics as being a possible cause of mental illness and preferred to believe spirits were involved; they also preferred that psychiatric facilities were kept well away from the community (Al-Adawi et al., 2002). Attitudes that cultures have towards real and imagined illnesses have an impact on whether the so-called 'imagined' illnesses are reported; in many cases, any illness of the mind is regarded as an 'imaginary' illness and is not reported (Atwater, 2014; Satcher, 2001). Yet, even when problems are recognised, there is reluctance to seek help, as AlAzzam and Daack-Hirsch (2015) found when they studied actualisation of mental health services in Arab families in the United States, whose children were diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Differences in cultural attitudes can also influence the ways in which people deal with stress. Asians tend to avoid negative thoughts, and to withhold from acknowledging any emotion (Chung, 2002; Dasgupta, 2007; Hsu, 1971; Kleinman, 1977); they try to work out any problems on their own (Narikiyo & Kameoka, 1992) or within the family (Leong & Leach, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2003). On the other hand, Africans have been found more likely to use religion or spirituality to cope with any distress (Cooper-Patrick et al., 1997; Neighbors, Musick, & Williams, 1998). They tend to use more active coping styles in dealing with

problems (Broman, 1996) and also are more inclined to find ways of coping with any kind of stress on their own (Sussman, 1987); they are therefore much more likely to apply collective coping strategies to address their issues, such as talking to each other (Belgrave & Allison, 2009).

There is also the cultural aspect of where people may find support when they do acknowledge that they cannot deal with problems on their own; it was found that Africans living outside of their own country preferred to seek help from practitioners of the same ethnicity (Sue, 1998). Moreover, they did not trust mental health professionals, because they felt they would be discriminated against, due to their cultural background (LaVeist, Diala, & Jarrett, 2000). Rehman and Owen's (2013) study used a sample of black and ethnic minority respondents suffering from mental health concerns, while they revealed that Muslims were more likely to face discrimination, or racism, than other populations. This discrimination occurs when people are prejudiced against specific nationalities or groups, and this is more common in collectivist communities, where people's attitudes are influenced by public stigma (Ciftci, Jones, & Corrigan, 2013). However, personal stigma was found to be more prevalent in South Asian students and prevented them from seeking help (Loya, Reddy, & Hinshaw, 2010).

Nonetheless, it is often not recognised that there is a possible mental health problem as other issues may be involved (Cauce et al., 2002). International students adapting to a new culture may in fact put any stress they are experiencing down to the adjustment issues involved in living within a new context.

2.6 Adjustment and coping in international students

The psychological pressures of trying to adapt to the new culture are likely to result in the experience of negative emotions (Zhang, 2012). International students and their adaptation issues attracted a number of studies at the end of the 1950s, related to psychological and social problems the students encountered (Bobo & Fox, 2003). It was advocated that many of these issues were caused by migration experiences due to a lack of social support networks, the differences in values, and other negative life events (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008); this was regarded by many as the impact of culture shock, or the problem in trying to adjust to a completely different way of life. However, by the 1980s there were new perspectives being presented, namely that any problems relating to being exposed to a different culture could actually be managed and improved through orientation programmes

(Zhou et al., 2008). Such orientation programmes were proposed as a way of helping international students naturally settle into their new cultural environment and UKCISA (2008) gave guidance for universities on providing events to inform new students and direct them to support where needed. In addition, it was suggested that individuals needed to improve coping strategies to deal with the strain of life in a different environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Various theories on adjustment have been proposed including the U curve, which suggests that a sojourner is initially excited about the new culture, then starts to suffer from culture shock, and finally reaches a point of cultural acceptance and adaptation (Oberg, 1960).

The adjustment steps utilized for learning is a suitable approach during a student's learning journey (Lewthwaite, 1996), whereas Anderson (1994) suggests individuals need to find a solution to overcome any obstacles they may encounter when trying to adapt. Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1989) argue that individuals may maintain their own cultural identity, and choose to either engage with or avoid the host culture, or they may value the host culture to the exclusion of their own culture; finally they may value neither their own nor the host culture. These strategies may affect the level of stress affecting an individual's adaptation process (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999), but it is clear that there are a various theories which may apply to different individuals, as all international students react in different ways to specific stressors and tend to use a wide variety of plans to help them deal with their stress (Wang, 2009). In the next chapter, some of the relevant theoretical models will be discussed.

Previous qualitative studies have focused on themes arising from quantitative studies, such as loneliness (Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia, 2008), feelings of being discriminated against (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007), mismatched expectations (Major, 2005), facing emotionally challenging issues (McLachlan & Justice, 2009), and absence of advice (Ang & Liamputting, 2008). It was found that cross cultural interaction could be successful in supporting adjustment in international students (Ujitani & Violet, 2008). However, a qualitative study conducted in Australia presented students' personal stories on strategies they found effective in helping them overcome the challenges associated with adaptation (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). Suggestions from these students included preparing before departure so that future students were fully aware of their new environment and had a good command of English; they also advised on developing a more independent lifestyle and to ensure efforts were made for digital contacts in both countries, especially for building social

networks (Khawaja & Stallman, 2001). This is similar to previous findings where social networks are regarded as essential for adaptation (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004; Surdam & Collins, 1984; Ujitani & Violet, 2008). Yet international students reported that one of the best ways they had of managing any stress was by having contact with people from their own background, as they could share their experiences and issues with others who could empathise and understand (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011).

One other factor of relevance which presents itself as vitally associated with coping, is seen as distance between cultures, namely the distance seen between the host culture and the culture of origin (Babiker, Cox, & Miller, 1980). It has been found that where there is a substantial distance between these cultures, then the more difficult it was for students to adapt (Rosenthal, Russell, & Thomson, 2007; Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2009), this could be a predictor for acculturative stress (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Alternatively, a cultural or ethnic similarity resulted in better socio-cultural adjustment in international students (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). In addition, perceived cultural distance can lower the amount of social relationship building with people from the new nation (Epstein & Heizler, 2014). However, it must also be acknowledged that some other works may not find any such association between both cultural distance and the adjustment needed (Hemmasi & Downes, 2013). Nevertheless, it was found that going from an individualistic society to a collectivist society did result in better adjustment than going the other way round (Hemmasi & Downes, 2013). It may be that those from a collectivist society need to feel that they still belong to a group and, when moving countries, the support of that group is no longer there. This implies that international students from a collectivist culture, such as the Arabian countries, may find it more difficult to adjust when they arrive in a country such as the UK.

It is expected that students in higher education will develop independent skills and become more original in their thought processes. This might suggest a completely opposite view regarding expectations from students who come from structured, authoritarian backgrounds. Students may believe they are not being taught properly as they are not being given enough information from the teachers, but expected to find it out for themselves. This may put them in conflict with the new culture and may have a considerable impact on an international student's overall confidence of being able to adjust (Zhou et al., 2008).

There is a further variable which has an impact on adjustment and this is social support, which covers five main domains: emotional, practical, materials assistance, informational,

and social companionship (Cohen & Wills, 1985). A number of studies have found a interlinking co-operation between the social support and coping strategy (Yusoff & Chelliah, 2010) and, within a study conducted with first year international students, Ramsay, Jones, and Barker. (2007) found that the more support students had, the better their adjustment. Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, and Al-Timimi (2004) also found that students receiving a high level of social support normally had lower levels of acculturative stress. Nevertheless, in their study Ward and Kennedy (2001) did not point out relevant matches between social support and coping. There may be more underlying factors that impact on this factor, for example, the particular kind of social support that is provided, or some specific issues that students encounter. Alternatively, it may be that there is an association with culture that has an influence, as some cultures may accept social support more easily than others. This is therefore an area where more exploration could take place, as it appears that a number of situational and individual factors may need to be taken into account.

2.7 Influences of Family

Families and gender are also variables that can make a difference to adjustment. In terms of predictors of acculturation, Pantiru and Barley (2014) found that two of the important factors in predicting acculturation related to gender and being a parent; although there was an overall tendency towards integration from both sexes, women are more likely to assimilate and integrate, although cultural, religious or even some family students feel they can take part in open discussions when males are present. As females have a tendency to identify more with their home culture (Sumer, 2009), they may be more reluctant to take on a role that is unfamiliar within their own cultural setting; Zhang and Zhou (2010) reported how a Chinese female student found she had no conversation topics in common with her Canadian roommate. Patriarchal societies can contribute to women feeling inferior and not wishing to contribute their opinions, but also to women being influenced by family decisions over their academic progress; Khattak and Ridley-Duff (2014) report of Pakistani females being forced to marry before embarking on degree courses, as they may be considered too old for marriage when they finish their course.

Men tend towards separation and marginalisation; they may find that gender roles are different in the new culture, and that may contribute to stress within families, and have an impact on the acculturative process (Berry, 1997; Dion & Dion, 2001; Lim, 1997). There was

also a suggestion that those with more children were less likely to integrate, which Pantiru and Bailey (2014) hypothesised may be due to parents not being able to work.

In the past few years, there have been a profoundly higher number of research studies covering international students in both aspects that include acculturative strategies as well as their own experiences. One such study investigates the aspects in which there has been a particular focus on possible problems international students may encounter, any qualities that may be useful in helping the acculturation process, and experiences of living in English-speaking environments (Berry, 1997).

In a survey of some of the international students in the UK on their experience with the foreign culture and environment with reference to their family relationships, Wu, Graza, and Guzman (2015) described how one student felt there was no opportunity for him to interact with classmates as they all disappeared after class to be with their own friends and families, whereas he was all alone in the country with no familial support. Telephone communication with family at home was a preferred method of maintaining family relationships and family cohesion; Kline and Liu (2005) found that phone conversations were more likely to provide emotional support. Atri, Sharma, & Cottrell (2007) found that emotional support was significantly associated with the mental health of international students; such emotional support emanating from family tends to be related to feeling lonely, relationship problems and being upset (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). This kind of support was highly valued by Chinese students in a study by Yue, Fan, and Fan (2013), as it was unique and irreplaceable.

International students who move to study abroad with their families may experience stress, particularly when there is a mismatch between the speed of adaptation in family members. In cases where one member learns the culture and language of the foreign land faster than other family members, they may be used by them to help interpret and navigate through the new environment. This process not only increases pressure on the student, although the factor of parental authority appears. This can lead to inconsistencies found within parental discipline and increases the risk of problem behaviours, as children become overly responsible for interpreting private family matters and they take on a position of power (Fleck & Fleck, 2013; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Parent authority may be unsuccessful in transmitting both the cultural values and norms to their children, thus resulting in over-stressed communication and having a negative impact on the social support across the different generations (Fleck & Fleck, 2013).

For instance, if parents are not successful in teaching traditional cultural values to their children, it may result in awkward communication (Fleck & Fleck, 2013). Parents may try to teach their children a sense of duty to family, immediate and extended, or respect for their elders, but some young people may deny cultural values; this in turn could lead to embarrassment about the way their parents behave and contribute further to deterioration in communication between parents and their children (Chang, 2007).

Stress may play a great role in the acculturation and assimilate the process and may also share in culture distress, irrespective of inconsistencies in the rates of acculturation within a family. This potential conflicts within the gender roles (Cervantes, Gilbert, De Snyder, & Padilla, 1991), concerns about deportation or immigration status, also the perceived threat of discrimination (Manthei, & Gilmore, 2005), and there are also difficulties faced with learning a new language, including changes in family interactions (Crockett et al., 2007), or feelings of marginalisation (Rudmin, 2003).

2.7.1 Expectations of family

Many of the international students have a large amount of family money invested in them and therefore they are quite often reminded of what it took the family to let them be where they are (Turcic, 2008). As a result, many of these students keep away organised social activities, in an attempt to show that family money is worth investing in them as they study harder. They deprive themselves of the company of the other course colleagues, who may be willing to interact with them and maybe help them assimilate into the culture and environment surrounding them.

The nature of an overseas student is to embark on travelling away from their birth country to another, foreign land to seek an education; in most cases they aim to obtain a higher education level of achievement which therefore results in the inevitability of being away from their close family environment (HESA, 2014-2015). Such actions of leaving behind their own culture increase the difficulties associated with engaging in a new cultural environment, while being away from home for long durations, time is invested in contacting and thinking of their family members back home.

For instance, students who were used to the company of their relatives back at home may experience loneliness (Oluwafunmilola, 2012) distress and homesickness (Thomson, Rosenthal, & Russell, 2006), which may distract them from their studies. In terms of acculturation of the foreign student, this hinders their adaptation by being an anti-social factor, as they seem to want a relationship only with their own family and not with the people around them. It is only continuous interaction with individuals from the host country that contributes to a better understanding of the culture as well as quicker adaptation (Huang, 2015).

However, the frequency and intensity of communication with families in the home country is commonly intense at the beginning, of time spent away from the family surroundings, and as time progresses this level of frequency decreases as the student slowly integrates and finds themselves falling into a comfort zone, therefore becoming more acceptant of the new surrounding . Rickard (2016) describes how email contact with family and friends lessens over time as students settle into their new home and events around them became more important in their life.

Interaction among individuals within the new cultural surroundings is crucial for the acculturation of the international student in order to establish new social networks (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Asian cultures, which are from a collectivistic society, may find it more difficult to make friends in a Western society; the Asian students tend to be more interdependent as opposed to individual and self-sufficient like those from Western cultures (Mori, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Many non-Western cultures tend to view themselves as extensions of an interconnected family, and therefore depend on each other (Tan & Goh, 2006). It may then be a challenge for the student to adapt to the culture since they are not ready to associate with their fellow students. Such students may keep to themselves, or respond negatively to those who try to come near them. This is due to family influences as they were growing up.

Once a student feels that they have managed to adapt successfully to live in the new host country, they may have been influenced to take on board new ways of thinking, interacting and acceptance of other cultural values. This has a negative effect on the student's cultural, social and psychological challenges when their homecoming occurs during holiday times; this is known as reverse culture shock (Gaw, 2000).

Once an international student returns to their birth country, they may discover that what things were once like compared to how they are now after being exposed to new experiences and environments has changed; they feel and recognise completely different worlds of culture (Gaw, 2000). Residents of the student's birth country may expect a change in the student's technical knowledge but not with in the student's attitude as they assume that the student will remain within the same mind set towards the cultural values and norms as expressed before departure. Students who have either travelled with their children or left them at home will also face difficulties as they either suffer from multiple everyday barriers and tasks to face in their surroundings and separation or the child experiences culture difficulties adapting to the new school system and the language of the adopted country (Gaw, 2000); this phenomenon is equally as difficult to address once they return home. Wu et al. (2015) explain how difficult the expectations of families in the home country can be as they describe how a Taiwanese student's parents expected him to be able to speak English fluently from the time he first arrived in the UK.

2.7.2 Marital status

The marital status of a student may also have an impact on adaptation. Most often, those that are single find it a lot easier to interact and adapt to the foreign culture compared to those who are married (Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006). This may be due to the fact that those who are not married do not have the same obligations, other than to study and prove the financing of their studies abroad is worthwhile, whilst those that are married or single parents have responsibilities to those that depend on them. For instance, a father who goes to study abroad may not have so much time to study the culture in the host nation and look for ways to adapt to the new way of life; instead they may be preoccupied with their studies in an attempt to finish faster and go back home to look after their families, or maybe get a part time job that helps to fund their living and their family's life. They therefore do not have the same time to devote to mixing with others. Rickard (2016) explains that there are real difficulties for international married students to find enough free time for meeting new people.

On the other hand, married individuals who travel with their spouses may have a slightly easier time in adjusting to the host nation, since they experience less loneliness and isolation as well as support from their partners during the adjustment process. However, some of the sending countries discourage the company of family members, claiming that this may slow down the adjustment of that given student and significant findings of added stresses indicated

from Crockett et al. (2007) that students who are accompanied by their wife or husband might be going through extra stress.

Yet, despite the variances amongst those who are married versus those that do not have children or a partner to cope with in a new foreign country, the results are not in order as some research studies have indicated that married overseas students have an easier approach to adjusting than compared to the single students (Maundeni, 2001; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Verthelyi, 1995), while others find no significant difference between the adjustments of single or married students, arguing simply that married students may experience adjustment in a different way from single students (Porazli & Kavanaugh, 2006).

Studies which have found differences concluded that married individuals are most likely to forgo lower levels of stress and isolation as they have an established support system in their spouses. Recently within this field of research, Poyrazli and Kavanaugh (2006) carried out a unique investigation to determine the possible link between marital status, same ethnicity and academic success which is relative to the adaptation. It was conducted in five different universities in the US where students suffered from stress. The study identified that students who were married encountered a lower level of social strain compared to those who were single.

There are also instances where acculturation processes and outcomes are evident within students' families, and this may show up differences between various ways that partners adapt (Fink, 2010). Apart from adapting to the new culture, the married couple need to find a way together to be able to face the challenge of the new culture, the new language and different behaviours. Consequently, there may be an association between marital and acculturation problems as each may cause stress; marital stress was found to have an impact on immigrant Indo-Canadian women, who showed psychosomatic symptoms and depression (Dyal, Rybensky, & Somers, 1988). Naidoo (1985) found that the support of a husband was instrumental in reducing stress in South Asian women in Canada and El Haïli and Lasry (1997) determined that Muslim Moroccan immigrants in Montreal had less psychological stress if they had a happy marriage.

Overall, the evidence does not support immigration as a cause of marital conflict; in their study on Jewish families, Hartman and Hartman (1986) found no difference in marital strain between immigrant families and resident families; indeed they found that it was more likely

that native residents experienced marital conflict. This was further supported by Lindahl and Malik (1999) in their study of Hispanic and European couples in America and by Ataca (1998) in a study of Turkish couples in Turkey and Canada. Hartman and Hartman (1986) suggest that immigration means partners have to depend on each other and this may actually help their marital relationship.

Ataca and Berry (2002) suggest that there is a difference also relating to whether migrant women work outside the home or not; it is more likely to cause marital conflict if the woman is independent as she is not always available to support her husband. The traditional role of a husband is still clearly evident in many of the societies that the international students come from, and when a woman is fully dependent on her husband, there is no challenge to the husband's authority (Ataca, 1998).

2.7.3 Family Conflicts

Intergenerational conflicts in immigrant families are also evident in literature. One study by Szapocznik and Kurtines (1993) found that young Cuban Americans were much more likely to adopt the values of American society than their parents; whilst the parents clung to their traditions, it was more difficult for them to control their children and try to instil traditional values in them, as they had adapted so quickly to the new culture. Phinney, Ong, and Madden (2000) studied these differences in intergenerational values and found that they were more pronounced in families who had lived longer in the new culture; however, they concluded that this may be due to normal conflict between the generations rather than be related to immigration. There may be cultural differences as Fuligni, Tseng, and Lam (1999) found Asian and Latin American adolescents were more prepared to respect their families' beliefs than European adolescents from immigrant families.

It is noted that, despite the studies on conflicts between generations, there is little about family status in the context of international students' adjustment; few studies show if there are differences between those with children and those without children. However, a study by (Oropeza, Fitzgibbon, & Baron, 1991) asserted that it is more probable that there will be adjustment problems between students that are accompanied by a partner or have the responsibility to care for children. The authors determined that any adjustment difficulties faced by a student who is studying abroad are doubled depending on how many responsibilities they are obliged to attend to. These difficulties posed by the student's family

can be partly explained by the student being so busy with their family that they have no time to socialise. Yet there are many studies where the support of family is regarded as beneficial to the adjustment process (Edwards & Lopez, 2006; Hyung-Chul, Ji-Young, Soon-Jeong, & Harry, 2015; Rodriguez, 2007). Consequently, it seems that both marriages as well as family duties are also known as variables worth considering in this study of dealing with adjustment as an overseas student within in a new environment.

In addition to married couples, there are also single parent families who are studying as foreign students in the United Kingdom. The main challenge to international students who are single parents is that they have nobody else to support them with their responsibilities; in their own country friends and relatives are likely to be supportive and help with feelings of loneliness (Gladow & Ray, 1986). In a new culture, it is more difficult finding ways to combat the loneliness, anxiety and depression that may come with trying to meet their own emotional needs as well as those of their children (Feltey, 2003).

2.8 Stressors that international students experience

In regards to the importance of the study, it is clear to see that stress levels of students coming from abroad as an international student can be critical (Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2007) and are frequently linked to newly exposed acculturative situations (Lee Koeske, & Sales, 2004). As mentioned earlier, foreign students need to adjust to their new cultural setting. It seems that the way in which they are perceived in their new home may also depend on the host culture expectations and the social stigmas attached to their nationality and ethnic group (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Such discrimination can have a profound effect on an individual, especially one who has been held in high esteem in their own environment. However, Gaines (2001) found that relationship partners can provide social support for the individual undergoing such stress, and this can help in moderating the level of stress experienced.

Language difficulties can be a major source of stress as this may impact on academic success (Mori, 2000; Pederson, 1991). They may not understand everything that is said in lectures, or in sessions with a tutor, and they may find it difficult to take notes in English, or complete assignments such as essays, even when they seem to express good communication skills, specifically with the use of the English language. International students are often found to have already achieved high academic performance from their own country, whereas they

struggle in the host country as they try to deal with communicating in a foreign language (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). This may even lead to underperformance in examinations and they may begin to see themselves as failures. Language proficiency may also have an impact on a student's social interactions (Chen, 1999). They may find it hard to integrate and make friends with the local population, and a lack of language proficiency has been found to have a significant impact on students trying to adjust to the new culture (Watkins, Razee, & Richters, 2012).

Psychological amendment is measured and witnessed according to an understanding of the new culture, the desire to fit in with it, and the ability to adapt to it (Harrison & Brower, 2011). All of these can affect the degree of stress that international students experience. Other key stressors identified involve cultural identity, loneliness, cultural differences, anxiety and environmental factors, all of which can be described as culture shock (Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012). The pressures specifically on Middle Eastern students to succeed also come from their families and sponsors in their home country (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006) and more recently there have been political issues, such as civil unrest, demonstrations, and violence, in many of their own countries which have caused more stress. Alazzi and Chiodo (2006) report feelings of inadequacy and loss of self-confidence in Middle Eastern students which further impact on their stress levels.

Another area which has not been well documented is the effect of stigma attached to religion as a stressor (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). Religion may be regarded more as a coping strategy, as will be discussed later, but it can also be seen as a cause of stress. This is especially relevant to those from the Middle East, who come from a Muslim background. In terms of the political environment, Muslim is now being associated with acts of terrorism, and a recent BBC survey shows that there is indeed certain ambivalence to terrorist acts from British Muslims (BBC, 2015), this may help to explain why a certain stigma is attached to those from a Muslim background. Kunst, Tajamala, Samb and Ulleberga (2011) argue that this issue has been mainly ignored, yet the impact of religious stigma on Muslims may mean that they feel apologetic and responsible for actions outside their control.

It was identified by Goffman (1963) that religion, along with ethnicity and nationality, could be regarded as stigmatized; such stigmas can mean that individuals are isolated as they are avoided by the host country residents. The expectations of being accepted into the new cultural society may not be realised, and therefore create the stress of being an outsider and

not welcome. Additionally, it has been suggested that some individuals may come to believe that any negative experiences they have are due to them being punished or abandoned by God (Ellison & Henderson, 2011); this can have a significant impact and lead to mental health issues (Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2004). University holidays would seem to be a time for the stress to be lessened, but it can be a very stressful period for students who are unable to return home. There may be deadlines for course work which need to be met, especially around the Christmas holidays. This is further impacted by cold and wintry weather and short days which the international student is experiencing for the first time. In addition, the university accommodation may need to be vacated and student support systems may be closed down. There may also be students who simply cannot afford to go home as they are under financial pressure. Others may be worried about their visas, as there may be difficulties they face in renewing them (UKCISA, 2010) and they are not sure if they will be able to continue their studies; this is especially where students are forced to return home to recover from severe mental illness.

2.8.1 Social relationships

Specific stress outcomes have been identified in the process of acculturation; these have included reduced anxiety, confusion, mental health, depression and even identity issues (Berry et al., 1987). In their review of 359 students coming from abroad as foreign students from Asia, Central and Latin America, Europe and Africa, Yeh and Inose (2003) concluded an understanding of the level of social support, fluency when communicating in English and knowing the scale of feeling satisfied were all seen to be able to predict whether someone may be subject to acculturative stress. It was also found that more contact with others of the same nationality had a negative impact and that international students who tended to have more relationships with their co-nationals were more likely to show signs of acculturative stress (Poyrazli et al., 2004). As mentioned previously, competency in English can have an impact, and this is especially so if international students come from countries where English is not a compulsory subject in the schools. Even when it is taught in schools, it may be difficult for students to understand the language at a high academic level or in idiomatic speech as used in the host country. This can give students a lack of confidence (Telbis, Helgeson, & Kingsbury, 2014). These factors are relevant to this study as it is being conducted with international students studying in the UK, where interaction with the host

nationals is all in English, and if students lack confidence in using the language, they are less likely to form social relationships with those around them.

A feeling of confusion about identity can cause stress, as individuals begin to question who they are. In the middle of a foreign environment they may feel they are outsiders, which Xiong and Smyrnios (2013) suggest leads to avoidance behaviours and perceived risks. In order not to feel like an outsider, some students alienate themselves from their own community only to find that they are then not accepted by the host community either (Husom, 2009). Jibreel (2015) argues that the aim of the international student is to belong, and consequently alleviate feelings of loneliness; however, this may not happen if they are not able to form social relationships in the new cultural environment. A number of studies show that the amount of engagement between international students and home students represents an extremely minimal interaction (Daroestan et al., 2005; Rosenthal et al., 2007); furthermore, a study by Berry (1997) shows that international students who manage to keep a good social relationship with those from their own culture, as well as those from the new culture, have a much lower level of stress due to adaptation.

2.8.2 Culture stress

The reaction to moving from one cultural environment to another can be severe in some cases, especially when there is a large gap between the values, morals, logic and beliefs that international students have grown up with (Winkelman, 1994). They may suffer from exchanging the familiarity of their home environment to dealing with foreign foods, unknown labels, changes in climate and unusual behaviours. There have been particular indications of such culture stress seen in international students in the way they obsess about washing their hands, their concerns about food, and their fear of being cheated by host nationals (Oberg, 1954). In their study of Australian international students, Thomson, Rosenthal, and Russell (2006) found that most students reported some degree of stress.

In the classroom there are particular problems for Arab students, unused to Western approaches to learning; a study by Abukhattala (2013) describes the common experiences Arab students have in trying to adapt to a different educational context in Canada. Such students often have a background of teacher-led classrooms, rote learning and out-of-date textbooks (Abukhattala, 2013) and may find it particularly difficult to adjust to active participation in classes, critical thinking and research activities that are expected in Western

education. Although students may consider themselves proficient in English, they often lack the communicative skills needed in Western universities (Abukhattala, 2013).

The Western culture of learning causes many international students problems as they are not used to being asked to question what the teacher has said (Major, 2005), yet this is a common practice in UK universities, especially when students are given essays to produce. Looiparg, Tait, Yates, & Meyer (2006) suggest that Western universities are imposing cultural values on international students; thus the expectation is that such students will modify their own cultural values in order to succeed academically (Berstein, 1996). This can be both confusing and stressful for international students and impact on their learning experience (Rautopuro & Vaisanen, 2000).

Such stress has a significant impact on students' academic success, and reducing stress may be the most important factor in ensuring that international students achieve their goals while studying at a foreign university (Telbis et al., 2014). In some ways these stressors can be mitigated if international students have sufficient information about the host country before departure from their own country. However, the reality of the situation is always going to be a challenge and it is likely that there will times when international students suffer from homesickness.

2.8.3 Other factors

Through previous research carried out on international students and their experiences in adapting to a new culture. One of the factors contributing to stress has been financial issues, as many students struggle in trying to deal with managing their money and this has been found to be one of the most important reasons of strain (Mori, 2000; Mullins, Quintrell, & Hancock, 1995; Roberts, Golding, Towell, & Weinreib, 1999; Tyrell, 1992). Living expenses are different in the host country and students often find it very expensive living in the UK (Wu & Hammond, 2011). Telbis, Helgeson, and Kingsbury (2014) report that many international students are not admitted to American universities as the US government requires them to ensure that students can meet their living expenses without needing to take on illegal employment. There are similar restrictions on overseas students who are coming to the UK to study; they are required to show that they have sufficient funds before a visa will be issued (Home Office, 2016). Students on visas in the UK are often limited to work only twenty hours a week (UKCISA, 2015), although it is vital to witness an added stress of

finding a suitable part-time job, and a negative impact this may have on study time and achievement (Rockicka, 2014). Students who spend more than 15 hours a week working are less likely to spend time on educational activities (Kalenkoski & Pabilonia, 2009; McVicar & Mckee, 2001).

Language difficulties have long been recognised as a primary source of stress in international students (Andrade, 2009; Halic, Greenberg, & Paulus, 2009; Mori, 2000; Watkins, Razee, & Richters, 2012), and various issues with language have been mentioned previously in terms of their social relationships and work opportunities. However, language also has a considerable effect on academic study. This is because poor language skills mean students have issues with their academic work, and subsequently this has an impact on their confidence and psychological wellbeing (Lin & Yi, 1997). Underdeveloped language skills can also mean that international students do not have the ability to do the same tasks in class as other students (Kim, 2011). International students have often been awarded scholarships to study abroad, on account of their high achievements in their home country, therefore they are under more stress when failing to achieve those same high standards in the new country (Pedersen, 1991). Yet even where their language skills are adequate, many international students are still not ready to meet the demands of studying in a different cultural environment (Jepson, Turner, & Calway, 2002).

It has also been noted that cross-cultural differences might prohibit overseas students making social acquaintances with students who are studying locally (Mallinckrodt, 1992). This is because international students, particularly those coming from collectivistic societies, do not actually understand the more individual and independent characteristics of local students, and they may feel discouraged in trying to develop friendships with them (Mori, 2000).

There have been a number of studies pointing to the lack of social support for international students, which has a significant impact on their psychological wellbeing (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Sandhu, 1995). The emotional and social support systems they had at home are no longer available when they move countries. Satisfaction levels with social support networks have been found to influence the level of acculturation distress that international students experience (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). In particular, women's affiliative style of relating increases their need for support networks (Frominos & Brown, 2010). The lack of support networks such as family predisposes migrant female students to mental disorders such as depression. They have no one to share their negative experiences in the UK. This leads to

them feeling lonely and thus they may lead to them developing mental illnesses. Women have a different style of relating and forming close and meaningful relationships. They are more likely to admit feelings of weaknesses and loneliness than their male counterparts. Female migrant students therefore need a close network of friends with whom they can share experiences of loneliness and even everyday life. A strong need exists to find a suitable social support system may lead to deterioration of their mental health.

Family support has been considered as one of the moderating influences of stress but a study by Jalomo (1995) found that the transition between home life and school life was very challenging for students. It was suggested that students should not be facing such challenges on their own and that they needed more support from their institution, as the academic environment was likely to be so different from their own values and traditions (Rendon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000).

2.9 Coping strategies

To deal with these difficulties in coping with problems in making the necessary changes to merge and become integrated in their new hosting culture, individuals develop various ways of coping (Sumer, 2009); Sumer's study revealed gender differences with female students being more likely to use positive reappraisal or to seek social support. Coping styles play a significant role in psychological health (Furukawa, Suzuki-Moor, Saito, & Hamanaka, 1993). In developing successful coping behaviours, people can deal with problems and reduce levels of stress. Previous findings (Rokach, 1999) revealed that there were significant cultural variations among coping strategies used; therefore more studies of various cultures would be appropriate. Americans used behavioural coping e.g. (adapting behaviour to cope with stress) whilst Asians used cognitive coping (e.g., putting problems into perspective) (Rokach, 1999). Yoshihama (2000) investigated various types of group acculturation, looking at methods of dealing with stress comparisons. Yoshihama (2000) results indicated that women who come from Japan were labelled to be less active than their peers from America. Taylor et al. (2004) found that Euro-American and Asian students under stress tended to seek support from their families.

Different coping styles are used depending on both the individual and the situation. Wang et al. (2009) argue that personality traits are predictors of coping styles and consequently individuals will find one that best suits them, whereas (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) demonstrated that individuals have a tendency to utilize different adapting styles depending

on the stressful situation. There may even be gender differences; Ptacek, Smith, and Dodge (1994) reported that women tended to seek social support, whereas men used more problem-focused coping; Matud (2004) found that women suffered more stress than men and used emotion-focused coping strategies. Carter et al. (1985) found that male students had a more mature approach in coping styles (for example, dealing with the problem) than the female students. Wang et al. (2009) consequently found that those who used more mature coping styles had good mental health compared to those who used immature coping styles (for example, people who cannot deal with problems). There is therefore a possibility that female students may be those who are more susceptible to mental health issues.

A longitudinal study of American students by Pritchard, Wilson, and Yamnitz (2007) found that students' psychological and physical health deteriorated by the end of the first year of university study. They disclosed that negative coping styles, along with a predisposition for perfectionism, were two of the predictors of poor mental health, psychological health and alcohol usage. Another study of British students in the USA conducted by Ward and Kennedy (2001) also revealed that some coping styles resulted in poor psychological health and included the avoidance coping style; whereas a humour and approach coping style facilitated psychological wellbeing. Liu and Iwamoto (2005) found that students used the telephone and internet to contact friends and family and to reduce stress and that those living with relatives or families were more comfortable than those who were single. Active coping strategies and the use of emotional support, often available from friends and family, were found to be more likely to predict the overall adjustment of students (Tuna, 2003).

Coping strategies have been found to reduce acculturative stress and help with the procedure of adapting to a newly exposed cultural environment (Sumer, 2009). It has been found that religion, family and peer support are all helpful to students coping with a new culture (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). However, although there may be a relationship between coping skills and adjustment, it is still uncertain that particular adaptation styles are able to point out positive outcomes linked with adjustment (Pritchard et al., 2007). Various studies have identified a number of different strategies which all play a part in supporting adjustment; these are strategies such as setting personal goals (Sparrow, Kinnear, Boyce, Middleton, & Cullity, 2009), mentoring (Malau-Aduli, 2011), using student support services (Wu et al., 2015), compromising and communicating with family and friends (Sicat, 2011), self-determination (McClure, 2007) and positive thinking (Borg & Cefai, 2014).

Ninot et al. (2005) found in their study on the coping strategies of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients enrolled in an inpatient facility, and gender differences were found. In general, the females in the study made use of emotion-focused strategies more than the men, who relied more on problem-focused coping strategies. In this disease process however, emotion-focused coping strategies can actually amplify the consequences of COPD (Ninot et al., 2005). In this study, the differences in coping style found led to a better understanding of how to tailor health education programs for these patients, directing them to make more use of other coping strategies.

In general, the more active coping strategies have been found to be more effective in reducing psychological distress (Zeidner & Endler, 1996). These include cognitive and behavioural approaches, and include being able to moderate expectations; there is a relationship between expectations and psychological wellbeing, and it has been shown that where difficulties are under-estimated it can lead to distress (McKelvey & Webb, 1996; Ward et al., 2005). It may be, therefore, that a protective factor lies in the lowering of expectations. As previously mentioned, many international students have very high expectations of themselves as they have been high achievers in their own country; in addition the expectations of their families and governments may increase pressure, especially with reference to immigration rulings. When they are studying in English, they may not be able to achieve the same academic standards as they were able to achieve in their own language. A more realistic level of achievement may reduce stress, and yet still allow them to achieve a positive outcome.

2.9.1 Coping flexibility

Coping flexibility covers three aspects: the individual's perception of control of a given situation; the right strategy to cope with the situation; and the effectiveness of the coping strategy in achieving the objective (Cheng, 2001, 2003). Individuals tend to utilize different strategies according to context as well as culture. There are many advantages to being able to deploy individual coping behaviours changes according to the stressor, and may depend on the expectation that the stressor can be controlled (Rosberger, Edgar, Collet, & Fournier, 2002). It may also rely on how much preparedness is required (Herring, Gray, Taffe, Tonge, Sweeney, & Einfeld, 2006). For example, disclosing strong emotional responses may be moderated by the way in which these will be received by the listener (Harber & Pennebaker, 1992; Kelly & McKillop, 1996), but the listener must be the right person for disclosure.

There a variety of coping behaviours depending on the situation (Block & Block, 1980; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), but there have not been many studies on the flexibility of coping behaviours, despite evidence that the utilization of flexible strategies is most likely to predict the best opportunities for positive adaptation outcomes (Bonanno, Papa, Lalande, Westphal, & Coifman, 2004). Flexibility can depend on the individual's personality characteristics as to how they respond to any new situation, and how they consequently cope with it. Most of the studies available have been restricted to laboratory paradigms: one such study has measured cognitive flexibility and attention-deficit (Douglas, Douglas, & Barnes, 1995); another has assessed how different dimensions of coping contribute to flexible or inflexible styles (Cheng, 2001); Bonanno et al. (2004) and Westphal, Seivert, and Bonanno (2010) measured flexibility in the suppression of emotion; and Coifman, Bonanno, Ray, and Gross (2007) assessed flexibility in the relationship of positive and negative effect.

It has also been found that students with depressive symptoms were more likely to utilize maladaptive adaptation methods, and therefore perceived events as being outside their control (Cheng & Cheung, 2005). Such students were consequently more at risk as they had lower coping flexibility, and therefore required more support in developing skills that would enable them to have positive outcomes, even when depressed (Zong et al., 2010).

Gan, Shang, and Zhang (2007) suggest that it is crucial to be aware of the association between the locus of control and psychological symptoms. The perception of being able to control a situation, appraise the situation and then match to an appropriate coping strategy determines whether a student is more likely to suffer from psychological stress (Gan, Shang, & Zhang, 2007). Coping flexibility is therefore significant as an indicator of the ability to cope with stressful situations and avoid student burnout (Gan et al., 2007). Being able to abandon a coping strategy that is ineffective, and replace with an alternative coping strategy can contribute to psychological health (Kato, 2012).

2.9.2 Cultural differences in coping

According to Wong, Wong, and Scott (2006, p. 1), culture is typically, and simply, described as “the customary practices and language associated with a particular racial or ethnic group”. However, culture goes much deeper than this basic description. Cultures are created by humans to fill the surface needs of enhancing their “physical survival and creature comforts” (ibid., p. 2), and on a much deeper psychological level, to share cultural metaphors and symbols, which satisfy the need for significance and meaning (Lonner, 2007). They are

expressions of human nature, and how we manifest our capacity as humans, for intellect, creativity and strength of imagination to deal with certain situations that we are not familiar with. Key variations between cultures are prominent in their existence due to the fact that the group of realistically exposed situations encountered in the new cultural environment, dominant religions, past outlooks, philosophies, and events that occur through a political nature which are unique to each, come together to shape each one into an entity that is perceptively distinct from another (Lonner, 2007). The nature of culture is interactive, and as such, psychologists endeavour to study how culture impacts cognitive and behavioural processes, as well as how emerging cultures are impacted by human and social cultures. As Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explain, 'coping' is to be ready for cognitive change as well as behavioural attitude as one manages internal or external demands that are deemed to be taxing. They describe coping as being as being problem-focused, where efforts are directed at the demands, or emotion-focused, where efforts are directed at the emotional reactions to these demands. With all the aforementioned points in mind, it is not difficult to understand why coping behaviours in relation to stressful situations may vary across different cultures, as certain cultures have a propensity towards emotion-focused strategies, whereas others are more focused on problem-solving. Individuals learn these coping strategies through socialisation within their cultural setting (Olah, 1995). Varying methods of coping with stressful situations, or coping behaviours, are used across a variety of cultures; Bardi and Guerra (2011) argue that culture may also influence the perceived difficulty of an event, and that in turn may influence the coping strategy used. They further add that this perceived difficulty may further be influenced by the cultural distance experienced in moving from one country to another. Furnham and Bochner's (1982) research covering a critical review of international students in the United Kingdom showed that it was more difficult for such students to adapt if they came from a culture that was significantly different to the UK.

Multiple studies have shown that how one copes with major life events and minor daily hassles is influenced by cultural norms and values, but there have been fewer studies carried out, which show a strong relationship between cultural differences and coping behaviours (Israelashvili, Taubman-Ben-Ari, & Hochdorf, 2011). Israelashvili, Taubman-Ben-Ari, and Hochdorf further state that the reports of this proposed relationship have been partial and inconsistent, but on the other hand, other studies have shown similarities in coping behaviours across cultures. In their study, they were able to demonstrate that ethnicity alone was not a good enough basis in explaining an individual's coping behaviour, but ethnicity

should in fact be considered together with other factors such as gender and religiosity. These factors together better approximate to a culture, than ethnicity on its own, which further affirm the fact that cultural differences greatly shape our differences in coping behaviours. Western societies use social support more frequently, whereas non-Western cultural groups tend to use coping through emotion-centred approaches and religious practice (Bardi & Guerra, 2011).

In a study carried out by Lee and Mason (2014), the relationship between both gender and cultural differences in suitable ways of addressing certain cultural situations where a form of coping strategy is needed, was assessed between two groups: Korean American older people and Caucasian Americans. An older subgroup was selected as it is established that coping strategies significantly affect the health of older people. In regards to cultural differences, Lee and Mason (2014) found that Korean Americans scored better in regards to coping strategies that were problem-focused and also emotion-focused. It was also found that the Korean Americans utilised self-blame and denial more than their Caucasian American counterparts. This was proposed to have been so due to the collectivistic nature of the Asian culture, which is characterised by individuals attempting to change themselves in order to fit into the group, instead of changing situations within the group, and this is often done through suppressing their emotions and behaviours. According to Lee and Mason (2014), Asian Americans may believe that they do not possess a high level of control regarding their social engagements, denial being a common coping method for individuals who believe they are not able to change their situation.

An earlier study by Lee and Mason (2013) looked at the coping strategies, in addition to the optimism, among Korean, Caucasian American and African American older females. In this study, the gender is controlled as only women were chosen as participants. The study revealed that religion was the most commonly utilised coping strategy, whereby the abuse of substances was the least commonly utilized coping mechanism out of three different groups. The ranks of all the other assessed coping strategies varied across group. Other practiced coping strategies or behaviours included denial, venting, and self-blame, but the utilisation of these was different across the groups. Caucasian women utilised denial the least of the three groups, while the Korean American and African American women practised this coping strategy at similar levels. In regards to venting, older African American women utilised this the most in comparison to the other two groups, followed by Caucasian Americans, and then

Korean American women, who utilised this coping behaviour the least of the three. In order of greatest utilisation to least, Korean American older women, followed by American older females as well as Caucasian American females, utilised the coping behaviour of self-blame. The research more importantly highlighted an association between coping behaviours and optimism. In general, the relationship found was that the less optimistic an individual was, the more likely they were to practise one of the more negative coping mechanisms, such as venting, self-blame, denial and behavioural disengagement, to effectually avoid problems.

The reason for religion being the most common coping strategy across all three is interesting; it was noted that African Americans relied on additional support from church members and clergy. However, the Caucasian Americans used friends and the Korean Americans used family support. Nonetheless, there may be two things to consider; one is that the sample used for this study were older generation and that may influence their attitude towards religion being used for coping. Demographics for religion in the USA show that 88% of people aged 50–64 years old believe in God, compared to 73% of 18–29 year olds (Pew Research, 2014). This becomes even more of a contrast, when viewed in terms of the importance of religion in their lives; in the older age group 65% found religion very important, but just 40% in the younger age group considered it very important to them. Another is that the study was carried out in America, which Pew found is still one of the most religious countries in the world.

A group of American students who went to study medicine in Israel were assessed in two studies. The first study was carried out in 1996 by Schreier and Abramovitch, and then the following years later a follow up of effort of extended research was carried out by Abramovitch, Schreier, and Koren (2000) to assess if there were any changes with the passage of time, which can be attributed to changes made to the medical school. In the initial study, it was found that students who coped well in medical school were those who adjusted well to being in Israel. Conversely, those who had difficulty adjusting to the new cultural environment also had difficulty in medical school. The coping behaviours practiced by these students who weren't adjusting well to their new environment included wishful thinking, religiosity, blaming others, and they also seek social support or focus on their problems. Their cognitive performance was negatively affected by the anxiety and depression that they experienced, leading to poor performance academically, which in turn compounded their emotional distress. Other factors were found to affect the amount of stress these students experienced, some of which included importance of local social contact, leaving a partner

behind, effects brought upon a student's way of living, alcohol use, and different approaches to communicate with each other in the new society (Schreier & Abramovitch, 1996). This study resulted in new developments and changes being created at the medical school with the aim to assist students to improve their opportunities to gradually and naturally adjust to their new environment as well as feeling comfortable at the same school. The follow-up study revealed that there were improvements in the students' mental health. They were less depressed, more satisfied, and hence much less likely to implement dysfunctional defence methods, and seemed to be coping better. There was a greater level of familiarity with the region being travelled to, spoke Hebrew, or had relatives in Israel. Also, students identified the need for, and utilised, psychological counselling. The amount of heavy drinkers reduced, but the amount of smokers had increased to about 40%.

2.10 The role of religion in problem solving

For many individuals religion plays an important role in their lives. Americans, in particular, have a strong spiritual background; Shafranske (1996a) reported that 93 percent of Americans identify with a religious group. In the UK the 2011 census by Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2011) indicated that around 65% identified with a religion but by 2015 a British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA, 2015) showed this had dropped to just 51%; according to the same survey, this figure drops to less than this in big cities, such as London. This may indicate that each of these surveys may have been using a different measure but, nevertheless, these statistics do show that religion is still an influence in the lives of many. Religion has been shown to provide positive health benefits (Seybold & Hill, 2001), and Shafranske (1996b) found that there are positive associations between believing in religion and wellbeing. Within the religious framework, Pargament (1997) suggests that there are three distinct coping methods: self-directing, deferring, and collaborative. The collaborative style includes sharing the burden of stressors with God, a style which is self-directing in its nature where people rely solely on themselves, and the deferring approach involves handing all responsibility to God (Pargament, 1997). Studies show that for a collaborative approach findings show decreased amount of distress (Schaefer & Gorsuch, 1991), and better mental health (McIntosh & Spilka, 1990).

There has also been a positive relationship between psychological wellbeing and practising religion, as many studies show; individuals have been found to be happier and less stressed if they attend religious services (Moberg, 1979) and praying has been associated with effective

coping (Richards & Bergin, 1997). Religious beliefs and practices can provide support (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975) and help to cope with anxiety and isolation (Scheff, 1979).

There is a suggestion that the positive links visible between religion and psychological health might in fact be due to the social support offered in belonging to a group (Graham & Haidt, 2010). This is also supported by Levin (1996), who suggested that religion and spirituality may have an influence on healthier behaviours and lifestyles. A study by McIntosh (1995) found that those who were rated higher on a spirituality scale had fewer depressive symptoms and this may be attributed to the intrinsic values of spirituality. Religion usually involves a more structured approach to practices and traditions, and individuals are more likely to be involved in membership of a group, whereas those who have a spiritual approach are able to draw upon inner strengths. Both religion and spirituality have been shown to have beneficial effects (Koenig, 2007; Nelson, Rosenfeld, Breitbart, & Galletta, 2002), and in a study of young Saudi women suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder, it was found that they trusted professionals who showed they were religious, often choosing help firstly from religious healers rather than mental health consultants (Al-Solaim & Loewenthal, 2011). It has also been shown that prayer has a consoling effect and is a significant predictor of mental wellbeing (Maltby, Lewis, & Day, 1999).

Nevertheless, Loewenthal (2007) and Pargament (1997) argue that religious practices are not always beneficial. In particular, individuals who believe that they are being punished by God for some wrong-doing tend to have poorer mental health outcomes (Loewenthal & Lewis, 2011). They also confirm that there is an association between feelings of guilt and religion, although it has been found that guilt is not a predictor or cause of mental health problems.

Various studies have tried to show a relationship between religion and coping, especially in its usage by international students, who were felt to be more religious than domestic students (Chai, 2004; Wei et al., 2007). This would predispose that religion would enable international students to adapt more easily and not be so affected by stress. However, in contrast, a study by Lee and Bradley (2005) found that there was no difference in levels of acculturative stress between international students who were spiritual or religious, and those who were not. Another study found that there was no association between depression and religion, although higher amounts of mental health problems are associated with the use of religious coping techniques (Sapranaviciute, Perminas, & Pauziene, 2012); this may be that students find themselves deferring to God for an insight that will direct them on how to solve their

problems or denying the problem by using avoidance coping (Kim, Knight, & Longmire, 2007). Interestingly, there is a finding that overseas students, and in particular males, are more reliant on the use of religion as a coping mechanism than domestic home students (Chai, 2009; Sapranaviciute et al., 2012). In addition, Haghighi (2013) argued in her study that students who achieved a higher education level may use more effective religious coping strategies. This has significance for this study, which relates to those at a university level of education.

There are cultural differences in the approach to religion, with many of the international students, especially the Arabs, coming from an Islamic background where family is so important. At the centre of Islamic society is the family unit (Al-Jamali, 1998; Abukhattala, 2004; Hodge, 2002). The concept of family in some Islamic cultures is different from that of Western culture, as it encompasses not only the parents and children, but the lineage (M'Baye, 1998; Hodge, 2002). For international students to be separated from their family means that they are also separated from their identity as part of a much wider and extended family.

A study by Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) found that Middle Eastern students rarely spent free time with Americans from the host culture. It is possible that social contact with the host community may be inhibited by religion. The Arab students, who are mainly Muslim, attend weekly prayers and universities have set up special prayer rooms for them. They therefore meet other Muslim students at these prayer meetings and are more likely to maintain contact with others who share the same values and they may find benefits in coping through their shared beliefs (Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997). On the other hand, given the stigma that may be attached to mental illness, they may find that inclusion in such closed groups may prevent them from finding professional help outside this group.

Religion has a role in providing messages of hope to migrants which can evoke strong feelings of psychological wellbeing, and this has been seen in the way migrants rely on religion as they make their journeys to new countries (Mahler, 2010). When people facing problems in a new culture are empowered, they often feel stronger and can face the difficulties more effectively (Chung, Bemak, & Grabosky, 2011). Consequently, religious groups have a role in encouraging and empowering migrants in adapting to the new cultures (Vermeulen, 2000). Religion enacts a great role in reaching out to individuals who have

embarked upon a journey to live somewhere else in their hour of need and ensuring they are prepared to face the challenges of the new culture (Foner & Alba, 2008; Groenendijk, 2001).

A study by Stone and Neale (1984 cited in David and Suls, 1999) found that the use of religion was positively associated with perceived problem undesirability. Based on the transactional theory, stressors which are viewed to be less controllable should result in more emotion-focused coping strategies, which would include the use of religion (David & Suls 1999). It was found that problems which were viewed as having a higher level of severity more heavily relied on religion and catharsis than methods such as acceptance. The use of religion as a coping strategy or problem solving mechanism has been well documented, and a study by Kuo, Arnold, & Rodriguez-Rubio (2014) shows that religion can improve psychological wellbeing through promoting appropriate coping behaviours. In terms of mediating effects, the authors found that religion or spirituality in students was at its most effective in limiting avoidance coping, and can protect people from severe psychological or emotional distress.

2.11 The role of social support in adjustment

There have been numerous credible research papers that indicate the strong need for social support in helping international students adjust to their newly exposed surroundings (Jackson & Warren, 2000; Misra et al., 2003; Eustace, 2007). Support from others is important in facilitating the transition from one culture to another. A sense of belonging may help international students to adapt; as suggested, this may come from others with similar backgrounds. A positive relationship has been found between both adjustment process and the social support (Yusoff & Chelliah, 2010), and students have reported that simple things like advice and guidance from university staff can help relieve some of the pressures with which they are confronted in a foreign environment (Lin, 2006). Seeking help when needed is especially important for international students; social support resources have been recognized as essential mechanisms for students who are not of the same ethnic origin as the majority of students (Boesch & Cimbolic, 1994; Constantine, Chen, & Ceesay, 1997; Harris & Molock, 2000). Yet researchers have found that international students often seem to be unaware of the support available to them (Brunel, 2016).

In their comparative study of Malaysian and home students at an Australian university, Ramsay et al. (2007) found that both sets would have liked more social support. However, they also found home students rather than international students were more likely to receive

emotional support given by their partners rather than international students who appear to be more independent or separate from accessing support. Overall, the majority of support came from friends (46%), whereas support from professionals was received by just 5%. This indicates that, although there may be avenues for support from the universities, this may not always be getting through to the students. A further study by Zhai (2002) conducted in America found that international students sought emotional and psychological support from friends and family, with most stating that they were unaware of any counselling services at the university.

Dervin's (2011) study explored how educators could facilitate adjustment of Chinese students in America, but found that social support came mainly from co-nationals, who recognised their cultural identity. This support, however, often meant that international students created a barrier and the host nationals were reluctant to interact with groups of students, who seemed to indicate that they preferred being with their own co-nationals; initiating conversations became an issue on both sides, as they did not wish to intrude on ethnic sensitivities (Shi, 2011). Although this may not be a preference on the part of international students, it does highlight the way in which ethnicity may be viewed positively as a support, or negatively as a barrier to integration. Moreover, Chavajay (2013) found that international students had a greater understanding of social support coming directly from other overseas students rather than from the host nationals, although this may be from the opportunity of having a closer relationship with fellow nationals. Yet, Sawir et al. (2008) reported that same-culture networks may be beneficial in some aspects, but they do not offer nearly enough support that international students require.

It is important to ensure that international students are more actively involved in their communities but lack of linguistic ability and cultural knowledge often prevent them from interacting with the host nationals. Mohan and Smith (1992) found that, even when placed in groups with native English speakers, Chinese students had little opportunity of participating as they were not considered equal partners. However, Parks and Raymond (2004) found that active participation in classes made international students feel they were valued in a different cultural environment. The support that students receive in the classroom from the university teaching staff may give international students the confidence and support to interact in other social contexts.

The sense of belonging that international students may have is intensified by mentoring and peer networking, especially if social activities are arranged (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). However, often these activities are not taken up by students; this may be due to a lack of confidence or poor communication channels in communicating such events. Asian students tend to be more interdependent on each other (Telbis et al., 2014), so they may not attend unless with Asian friends, whereas Arab students have a tradition of more oral communications and may not understand the full meaning of written communications (Zaharna, 1995). International students are living in an environment that is culturally unfamiliar to them and are therefore not always sure what their responses should be (Campbell, 2012). This is when they need friends from the host culture, who can offer some emotional support (Davis-Wiley, Benner, & Rider, 2007).

2.12 Use of metaphors to describe life experiences

As identified in the literature, international students can be experiencing a number of issues as they try and adjust to the new country with its unfamiliar values, culture, language and even the weather. These experiences find themselves being easily expressible through multiple forms, in behaviour and in communication. One way of communicating is through the use of figurative language (e.g., metaphors) in communication, especially when there is some difficulty in describing a thing or an experience. Metaphors are figures of speech that use one thing to designate something else, thereby making an implicit comparison, and their use in a study relating to mental health may enable deeper understanding of how participants perceive their life experiences in the host society. They compare two completely dissimilar things and are especially useful because they can evoke emotion (Turner, 2014) and break down barriers where people would not normally wish to discuss their inner feelings.

When international students do not have the language ability, or the inclination, to share their feelings, it may be that a real understanding of their experiences in the host country remains hidden; surveys and interviews may not allow a deeper exploration of the situation. Metaphors hold a unique place; they allow people to describe emotions by using imagery (Foster, 2012). However, the use of metaphors in working with mental health disorders has long been recognised as Billings (1991) advocated story-telling as a technique more than twenty years ago, although she suggested it was best used in the context of an interpersonal process. Where there is a tradition of storytelling and metaphors in a cultural context, the use of such techniques has been found to engage people and produce positive outcomes in mental

health settings (Rahill, Jean-Gilles, Thomlinson, & Pinto-Lopez, 2011). As Turner (2014) argues, metaphors can help explore new ways of finding out what issues are upsetting people.

Fabregat (2004) classifies metaphors into groups of meanings: ontological, emotion, movement and creative. Each of these groupings can then be developed and expanded so that fuller meanings are elicited (Kopp, 1995). With the influx of asylum seekers and refugees coming from troubled backgrounds, there has been more focus placed on narrative approaches and metaphorical stories and Lipscomb (2012) explains how the use of metaphors helps with both language and cultural communications. In providing an indirect approach to the issue of mental health, metaphors can remove both the stigma and the lack of conversation skills that may present a challenge to discussing mental health concerns. There is therefore a place for including metaphors in this study, as international students may experience the same barriers. Moreover, an understanding of cultural differences may be lost in using only quantitative methods to explore mental health, coping strategies and acculturation, hence, an examination of metaphoric phrases may help to provide more insight in this respect.

2.13 Summary

This chapter has critically reviewed the sources within the literature review relating to international students' adaptation and coping strategy at university. It has defined and given a brief background to mental health, and then related this to the challenges facing international students at universities. One of the biggest challenges is shown to be adjustment caused by the migration process. Further discussion has then been carried out on the stressors that can inhibit adaptation, the main ones being acculturation, culture stress and homesickness. Language issues can impact on academic success as well as social integration and this can have a negative impact on both variables, self-confidence as well as self-esteem. Everyday life, when faced with living in a foreign environment where the culture is different, puts many international students under pressure.

Consequently, coping strategies come into force and many of these have been found to be effective but only in certain contexts. Different cultures also tend to have a preference for certain strategies; therefore it is difficult to suggest specific strategies for dealing with particular stressors. Nevertheless, active coping strategies and emotional support have been found to facilitate adjustment. Religion may play a role in adjustment as well, though this is likely to be associated with social support as people may gain as much extrinsically from the

meetings of a religious group as intrinsically from religion itself. All students, whether international or home students, would welcome more social support; but international students are mainly unaware of the support systems within the university. They tend to depend mainly on support from friends or families, not from professionals.

With the purpose of getting an increased understanding of the challenges facing international students, the utilisation of metaphoric analysis may be beneficial as these have been shown to provide expressions that offer an interpretation of reality and are more likely to examine the international students' experiences and cultural semantics involved. They also allow students to create that story without impinging on their cultural sensitivities. In the next chapter, details will be given on the theoretical framework applied to this study.

3 Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

To give the present research a theoretical framework for carrying out the investigation and in order to conduct the research effectively, there have been certain theories that underpin the study. In this chapter these theories will be discussed, as they provide the framework which determines the focus of this research project. This then allows a model to be designed, which determines the factors to be investigated within this study.

Students going to universities in countries or cities with a different culture tend to struggle with the new social, educational and behavioural norms (UKCISA, 2016a). Moreover, they must deal with adjustment problems that face students encounter on an everyday basis; this becomes more challenging when the new international student does not understand the cultural and life differences in the host society (Zhou et al., 2008). The collective effect of such unacquainted experiences on such student sojourners has been termed ‘culture shock’ (Oberg, 1960).

According to Taylor (2005), estimates have indicated there are actually over a million international students studying at higher education institutions. The level of quality found within their experiences, from a psychological, sociocultural and educational perspective is very important as they are ambassadors for their own country. When they return to their home country, they will share these experiences and these can have an impact both on future enrolments at such institutions, but also on the way in which their compatriots view that country in the future (Schulman, 2014). It is therefore no wonder that there has been a large amount of research made available on the problems students have in adapting to a new culture. Not only can it affect future student enrolments, but also future relationships with that country (Universities UK, 2014); in addition it can have a serious impact on the students themselves. However, modern concepts of stress and coping have been greatly improved by theories highlighting personal environment interactions (Thomson, Chaze, George, & Guruge, 2015). Because of the amount of literature available on this topic (Hernandez & Blazer, 2006; Klengel & Binder, 2015; Manuck & McCaffery, 2014; Rasmussen, 2003), it can be seen that some progress is being made, although there is still a tendency to focus on

individuals rather than the relationship between an individual and their environment (Thomson, 2015).

The researcher has reviewed a number of models in psychological theories, migration theories and acculturation theories, which were utilised in the field of acculturation, and many of the strengths and limitations have been discussed as the result of these theories. However, many of the theories were disregarded due to being unrelated to the topic under study; but the following three theories – Concept of Culture Shock, Acculturation Theory, and Theory of Adaptation – were regarded for their potential effectiveness in recognising the association between mental health and acculturation, which were the variables needing to be measured in the current study.

This section outlines a framework based on credible research papers about moderating factors, acculturation, psychological health as well as adaptation. Thus, this chapter discusses theories of culture shock, an acculturation framework and their relevance to the process of adaptation for student sojourners. It also provides a rationale for using these theories.

3.2 Concept of Culture Shock

The meaning and terminology to identify “culture shock” was first presented by Oberg, who argued that “culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (Oberg, 1960, p. 142). This was referenced by Oberg to people who experienced culture shock when suddenly transferred abroad. It was suggested that such culture shock could be seen as a sudden realisation or mental block, with its specific indicators and that once the cause was identified, it could then be tackled or more easily dealt with. Agreeing with Oberg, David (1971) argued that culture shock was a regularly found phenomenonal experience for students who have come to a different country for study, and he further noted that in actual fact there was a clear decline in socio-personal adaptation; in addition, when a person is undergoing any kind of stressful event, there may be issues with behaviour. Similarly, Adler (1975, p. 57) noticed that “culture shock is primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one’s own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences”.

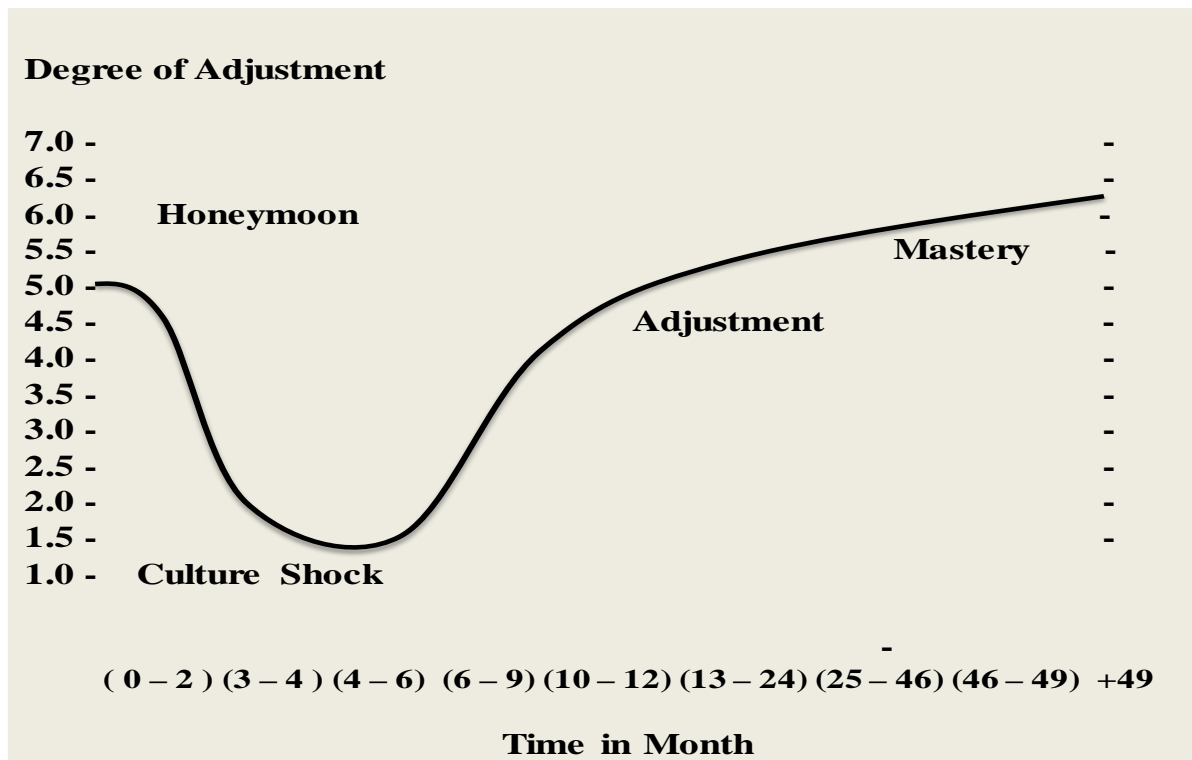


Figure 3.1 Adapted from Oberg's framework of the Degree of Adjustment

Oberg (1960) suggested that culture shock has different four stages in the process of experienced by sojourners (see Figure 3.1), described here.

1. **Honeymoon stage:** This stage is when the person first arrives and is caught up in the fascination of the new country, so is quite optimistic about expectations. Depending on the situation and the experiences of the individual, the duration will be unknown, and could possibly occur within days or expand to multiple months ahead. This may be related to how soon they are expected to settle down to an everyday routine, and they are no longer viewing the visit as a short stay. During this step, the person travelling to a new country is in most cases involved present signs of being involved with their newly exposed culture around them, however, not to the extent that they encounter any real problems. This stage is likely to include those who are on short courses or even as tourists, where they do not need to interact much with the new culture. It is only when they realise that this is an extended visit that they begin to realise the inevitability of facing and dealing with real their everyday life challenges; these are in areas for example communication, accommodation, transport, plus food and clothes shopping.

2. **Grief stage:** Within this stage, the sojourner starts to feel frustrated, anxious and angry which may be characterized by him or her having negative, perhaps even hostile feelings towards the host country; they therefore begin to have an increased association with fellow sojourners. It is within this stage that they find they have to deal with a number of issues in transitioning, and that it is not as easy as in their own country; this may be because of language issues or lack of support. If the sojourner cannot pull him or herself out of this stage, then it can lead to problems such as depression or a feeling of lack of control over events.

3. **Recovery stage:** This stage is a process of where the individual begins to accept the situation and tries to find a way to deal with it by starting to learn more about the new culture. It will be seen that the sojourner makes attempts at increasing his or her language skills and starts to get out and about in the new environment. There is also the recognition that the individual can use their sense of humour and laugh about things. This is a stage where many sojourners remain, although it does not have a negative impact on their experience in the new country. However, from here it is now that the sojourner can step forward to the final stage of being fully recovered.

4. **Full-recovery stage (Mastery):** This means adjustment is about as complete as possible, anxiety is largely gone, and new conventions are accepted and enjoyed. The sojourner is reflecting at their leisure on the experience and adapting well in their newly exposed culture.

Many other authors who are researching and applying these stages follow them in the same order, but they adopted different terms or name. One such author has a four-stage theory: Richardson (1974) labelled them as going through depression, experiencing elation, making efforts to recover and becoming acculturated; while Adler (1975) added a further stage to the process and actually identified that five different steps include making contact with others, possibly isolating oneself and not integrating with others in the new cultural surroundings, investing in new efforts of reintegration, and becoming autonomous and independent. Basically, they all chart the emotions experienced by a newcomer in coping with their newly exposed soundings; for some the process is relatively quick, but for others it becomes a prolonged process that can lead to psychological issues (Chen, 2009; Hener, Weller, & Shor, 1997). The psychological changes in individuals, according to this acculturation process, have been shown in Zhang's (2012) study of Chinese students at US universities. However, such affective theories have an impact on situational stress which is especially relevant to this

study. The feelings that international students may experience in coming to the UK to study may be modified by certain coping strategies and it is therefore important to include the concept of culture shock in the framework for this study. It has been suggested that everyone moving environments will suffer from culture shock to a certain extent, therefore the impact of this cannot be discounted.

3.3 Acculturation Theory

Since Oberg introduced the term of culture shock, several further studies emerged. One of these studies introduced an alternative term to “culture shock” by suggesting acculturative stress (Berry, 1970). Berry (1997, 2006) proceeded to provide two main justifications for exchanging an acculturative stress instead of a culture shock. Firstly, he suggested that the concept of going through a mental block and experiencing shock indicates a sign of negativity, and he believed that the term ‘stress’ may be seen as having positive as well as negative connotations. He argued that, when related to the concept of acculturation, the term “stress” would be a better fit as it covered both the negatives and positive experiences associated with adjusting to a new cultural environment. Moreover, there is, in psychological and cultural terms, no proven theories associated with shock, whereas stress already consists of a well-established theoretical framework. Cultural Adaptation, as a final point is in fact a set of steps to enact a way of finding communicating methods between two different cultures; therefore “acculturation” would be a more suitable term, as culture is simply a concept or idea. Acculturation encompasses more than one culture being different from another; it is a complete process of adapting to a new way of life (Berry, 2005; Mahoney, 2011; Wankel, 2009).

Berry, Kalin, and Taylor (1977) offered theoretical framework on acculturation including adaptation to achieve a credible study; he put forward the theory that where experiences of an acculturative nature were a main everyday activity in life, that could be considered by going through stress, and that needed a cognitive appraisal to address each stressful occurrence. In this case, it would consequently benefit from coping strategies. Figure 3.2 shows these processes, and how their psychological outcomes may be influenced by variables both at individual and society levels.

Settlement in a particular society and the society of origin are both significant factors. Either of these societies may have specific attitudes towards the other and these may be influenced by social, political, and demographic factors. In other words, there may be considerable differences in their ways of life and their perspectives and perceptions of others.

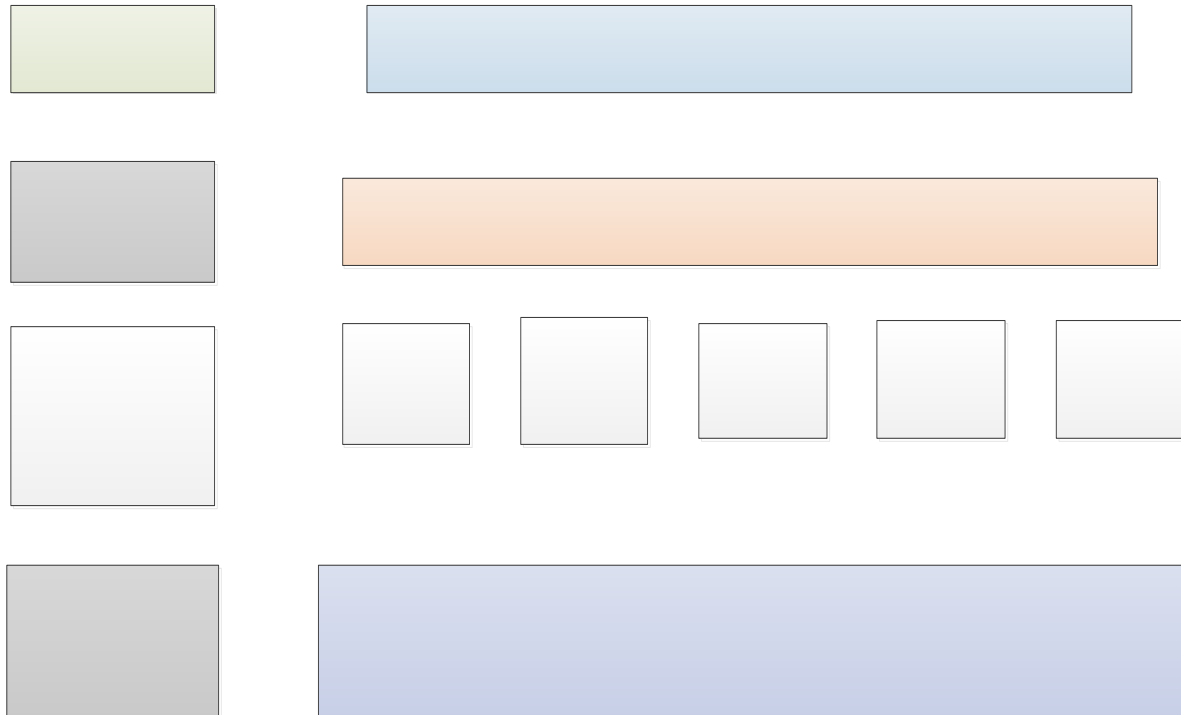


Figure 3.2 Adapted from Berry's (1997) framework of acculturation

At an individual level, the situation in which the individual finds him or herself may have a considerable impact on the acculturative experience and involve stress, coping, and adaptation. Moreover, Berry (1997) differentiates between impacts on the individual that arise before and during acculturation, indicating that the effects are due to changing environments (Berry, 1997). Nevertheless, there are many who do not agree with Berry; Weinreich (2009) and Piontkowski, Rohmann, & Florack (2002) believe that too much emphasis is placed on the part of the individual, who is held responsible for whether or not they can adapt to the new culture. Furthermore, there are some who criticise Berry's positivist approaches as being over-simplistic and not picking up all the nuances of acculturation (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009); they argue that experienced lives may help to make more sense of the conflicts involved in adapting to a new culture. This was later conceded by Berry (2009), who agreed that an interpretive approach could be employed alongside positivist theories to provide more insights. This study therefore seeks to take on

board both of these approaches, and consequently employs both a quantitative study using measurements and a qualitative study using metaphors for deeper insight. However, the core concepts of Berry's acculturation theory are still valid.

Regarding the framework, psychological acculturation starts with the short-term experiences that groups and individuals encounter resulting in an extended amount of time for adaptation (Berry, 2005). Key features include five ways to psychological acculturation (Schmitz, 1997). Firstly, the stages of trying to deal with life situations begins when someone is in touch with both culture, meanwhile a certain extent is forced to identify with both of them (Berry, 2005); this is seen as the acculturation experience.

Secondly, when attempting to appraise this experience, individuals tend to reflect on the meaning of such an experience, and view it as something that causes them difficulties; however, sometimes it can also be viewed as an opportunity, in which case acculturation is likely to happen more quickly (Weinstock, 2013), as individuals approach it with a more positive attitude (Kuo, 2014). The process of acculturation relates to the behaviour of the individual. Shifts in behaviour can be placed within a procedure that follows three different sub-processes that Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen (2002) describe as culture learning, culture conflict and culture shedding. Individuals change their behaviours and replace them with new appropriate behaviours in the first two processes of culture shedding and culture learning, as they adjust to the new culture. However, during these processes, it could be that there is a certain degree of conflict. When there is a large amount of conflict, people might sometimes view their experiences in a different light and as difficult to tackle, however they can manage it and feel confident to control it (Berry et al., 1987; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The issue arises when acculturation experiences overcome an individual and they can no longer manage the problems they are encountering; this may result in negative outcomes (Tafoya, 2011).

Thirdly, after they have been able to give meaning to their experiences, individuals can draw upon certain methods to deal with them. Such strategies can be placed under four main types (see Figure 3.2). These were originally developed by Berry and his colleagues (Berry, 1970; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989) and have since become adopted in acculturation theory (Rudmin, 2003). The strategies are as follows:

1. **Assimilation:** individuals exchange their own culture and traditions with a new culture and behaviours, and are quite happy accepting them.
2. **Separation:** individuals are reluctant in taking part within new tradition they are exposed to, involving emergence of customs and culture, and remain apart from the host country. Individuals do not want to interact with those from the host culture, but instead seek out those from their own culture.
3. **Marginalization:** individuals cannot fit into either their own society or the new society, as they are unsure of their identity and tend to withdraw from both.
4. **Integration:** individuals keep treasured ways of life and traditions of their own culture and embrace the new outlooks and behaviours of their newly exposed cultural environment that enable them to participate fully in the new society (Berry 1997, 2001).

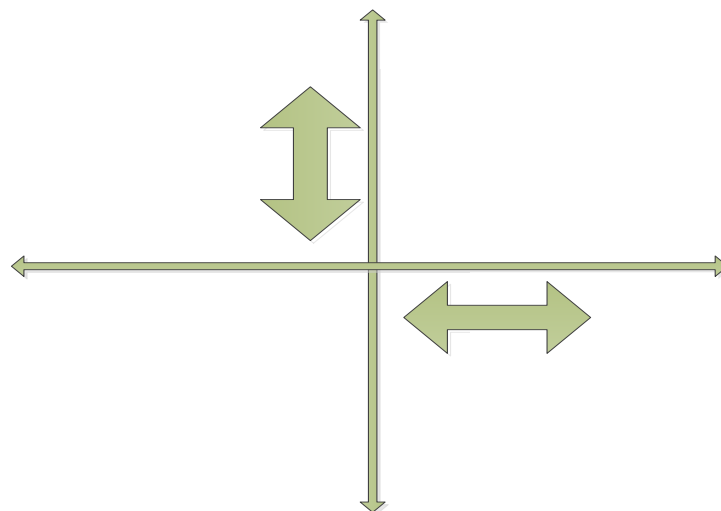


Figure 3.3 Adapted from Berry's four types of acculturation strategies

The fourth feature is dealing with the immediate impact of the stress being experienced. The impact of such stress can diverge, according to its difficulty (Steimer & Driscoll, 2009). Stress is possibly minimal and positive, when an individual's behaviour can shift easily. When someone has experienced problems but dealt with them successfully it is then more likely to show a greatly reduced amount of stress; however, sometimes it might seem that certain tasks are challenging, it can be anticipated that impactful outcomes and stress are consequently high and may even last throughout an expanded duration of time (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998).

Finally, one key aspect resents its self as being related to long-term acculturation. Adaptation usually means that changes happen steadily over a period of time. In the long-term, this adaptation can vary from being well-adapted to poorly adapted, but it really depends on the person's experiences in the newly exposed cultural environment. These five stages of adaptation are described by Schmitz (1997) as having pre-contact with the host society, initial contact, conflict, crisis and adaptation.

According to the model, there are certain factors present before individuals begin the acculturation process, and these involve both personal characteristics as well as demographic and social factors (Golding & Burnam, 1990; Hovey & Magana, 2000; Khan & Watson, 2005; Ma, Quinn Griffin, Capitulo, & Fitzpatrick, 2010; Osmun & Allen, 2001). The first factor is age, which is known to affect the acculturation process, as there is evidence that, the younger an individual is, the smoother the acculturation process becomes (Yeh, 2003). Nevertheless, older youths can often experience considerable problems, so it is not entirely related to age (Yeh, Kim, Pituc, & Atkins, 2008). Second is gender as this can have a variable effect on the acculturative stages. There is some evidence that it is more difficult for females than males (Beutler & Malik, 2002). The third is the level of education, which appears to be a constant factor; it is anticipated that those at a higher level of education and experiencing a university degree programme are more likely to have lower stress levels (Abraido-Lanza, Chao, & Florez, 2005). Education is a personal resource in itself, according to Berry (1997); students in higher education are taught to analyse and solve problems and this may well be a factor in providing support for better adaptation. A further factor is status; those who have been held in high esteem in their own country have difficulties in coming to terms with their lower level of status in a new environment (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Additionally, other factors occur during the acculturation process; one of these is the length of time the individual has been in the country (Pantiru & Barley, 2014). This can affect the kind of problems an individual may encounter, as certain problems change over time. For example, an individual may improve his or her language skills over time, and this no longer remains a problem likely to cause stress (Zhang, 2012). Also over time an individual may have more opportunities of establishing relationships, another known factor for being a barrier to acculturation (Bhugra, 2004b).

Strategies for helping with acculturation that are mostly related with meaningful and constructive adjustment and engagement are frequently the best and most effective way of acculturation, as it allows the individual to take on the new customs of the host country (Yu & Wang, 2011); it has been seen that the worst strategy is marginalisation as it does not allow the individual to become part of either society and leads to segregation (Del Pilar & Udasco, 2004; Ngo, 2008). The other strategies relate to coping, which is separate from acculturation strategies but nevertheless a link between coping and acculturation tactics has been found (Kuo, 2014). It has also been seen that social support is important when dealing with stress and coping. Moreover, social support is an important variable when it comes to predicting psychological adjustment as well as physical health when individuals go from one cultural environment to another (Birman, Simon, Chan, & Tran, 2014).

A significant moderating variable highlighted in previous studies are revealing an example of discrimination. Berry (1997) revealed a negative connotation between an individual's real or perceived situations they might have gone through that underpin signs of prejudice, including their psychological health (Berry, 1997). Such discrimination or prejudice can have a considerable impact on the acculturation process.

Although the acculturation theory has encouraged many researchers to study intercultural experiences, there are some problems with the theory. One such example is regarding acculturation seen as being common to allow them to explain such a varied amount of contact methods between the different cultures (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Another issue is the credibility of division, as it is difficult to comprehend how anyone can live without interacting with either the new culture or their own culture (Rudmin, 2003). Generally,

Berry's acculturation model reveals applicable potential in a number of different cultural settings and over a number of different domains such as language, religion, food and shopping habits (Bhugra, 2001; Sam & Berry, 2006). The model is also applicable to individuals who belong to more than one ethnicity or culture, but it ignores the fact that it is much more difficult to apply it to such individuals, namely because individuals have different attitudes to migration. Overall, the model can provide information on the process of acculturation, but deeper analysis is needed to understand the problems from the perspective of the individual.

In an attempt to uncover a wider range of stressors that may be applicable to individuals, Ying (2005) used the Migration-Acculturative Stressor Scale (MASS) to conceptualise acculturative stressors and included the five main categories of physical environment, biological factors, social factors, cultural factors and functional factors. The physical environment includes climate differences, unfamiliar settings and feeling safe, whereas the biological factors relate to food and health. Social factors involve feelings of homesickness, separation and loneliness, cultural factors include discrimination and differences in values and functional factors relate to academic issues, finances and transport problems (Ying, 2005). These stressors can lead to psychological symptoms, including anxiety, sleep disorder, as well as a dramatic exclusion of appetite (Redmond & Binyi, 1993). The most common factors reported by international students have been loneliness, homesickness and financial problems, academic issues, as well as language barrier (Klineberg & Hull, 1979). However, a more recent source of acculturative stress has been identified in the political field (Eustace, 2007). With so many uncertainties arising in both North Africa as well as the Middle East, there are fears on the part of students about their families in the home country (which may be experiencing political upheaval), and about whether they will be able to continue with their studies or be able to get security clearance (Starobin, 2006). There have also been negative feelings towards many Muslim students in relation to acts of terrorism (Amer, 2005). This is an area that has not yet been fully studied, but it may have a major effect on the acculturation process for more details (see Figure 3.3).

3.3.1 Demographic Factors

Berry (1997) suggests that age affects acculturation, and that younger people will experience fewer problems, although adolescents may have more issues due to their developmental stage; however, older people are at more risk of not being able to adapt. Yet literature relating

to international students indicates that there are more variables related to age and acculturation. There are some studies that show that older overseas students face increased challenges in coping than younger international students (Dee & Henkin, 1999; Poryzali et al., 2001); however, other studies find that younger students have more difficulties (Junius, 1997; Msengi, 2003). Yet more studies show that there are no differences (Junius, 1997; Msengi, 2003). There are other variables that need to be taken into account as age is not the only differential, and it may be moderated according to duration of stay in the new environment or the amount of social support available.

One factor that explains the increase in mental health problems among the younger, more traditional-aged students may be that the higher level of demand for psychological health disorders occurs before twenty-four years old (Kessler et al., 2007). It is also recognized that the timing of migration within the life course may have a real influence on the way in which migrants can adapt to a new life (Treas, 2008). Older people have more emotional attachments to their own country (Becker, 2003) and this may make the transition between countries more difficult. Indeed, Stokes, Thompson, Murphy, and Gallagher-Thompson (2001) found that cultural shock, social isolation and language barriers were the main factors in depression in older migrants. As McKeon (2014) found, migrants over the age of forty had quite different expectations than younger migrants, and often these expectations were not met; some well-qualified older migrants were not able to find work that matched their experience and qualifications and, although the men were often happy to take any work available, the women found their loss of status particularly difficult. International students include many within a slightly older age bracket as they come to take up new learning opportunities based on their work experiences. These experiences are important to the way in which individuals perceive themselves, and it can have an impact on their confidence and feelings of self-value when such experiences are undervalued.

Gender has been found to affect the acculturation process, with females being more likely to experience greater stress than males (Berry et al., 1987). Further studies have supported this (Church, 1982; Msengi, 2003; Pruitt, 1978), but others have found no differences between genders (Knowles, 2003). This inconsistency is illustrated by Cheng's (1999) study which shows that males have more problems adjusting than females. There is again the question of the other variables being used in these studies; as with age, these results may be affected by length of stay, language, and availability of work, among others.

Weich et al.'s (2004) research covering the prevalence of common mental disorders in England. They reported that prevalence of common mental illnesses was higher among Irish and Pakistani women. They also reported that immigrants from Irish ethnicity in Britain experienced worse physical and mental health than their white British counterparts. Hollander, Bruce, Burström, and Ekblad (2011) reported that there seems to be a specific risk factor in being an immigrant woman. Adverse experiences, roles, and psychological attributes can be the reason for these dissimilarities between men and women.

Financial stress is also higher in females, and it is likely to lead to mental disorders among female students in colleges and universities. This is according to Archuleta, Dale, & Spann (2013). Gender is a significant factor in financial practices as it influences the nature of goods being purchased. Female students are more likely to participate in impulse buying. They are also more likely to have regrets over a purchase they made, and they are more likely to use a credit card if they have insufficient funds. The overall effect of all these financial decisions is that there is a heightened level of financial stress. This is unlike in males who are less likely to purchase goods impulsively or use credit to purchase goods.

Migration significantly impacts on the traditional roles of men and women. Men also experience difficulties due to their loss of social status upon migration. In their home country they may have held a good position at work, but when studying in a different country, this status would be lost to them (Warfa et al., 2012). They are not allowed to express weakness, and this makes them reluctant to seek help, instead finding expression in loneliness, anxiety and isolation (Pottie, Brown, & Dunn, 2005); this may predispose them to mental illness.

Women have a tendency to focus their attention on self-blame which leads to lower self-esteem (Frominos & Brown, 2010). Males, however, externalise blame and present more chances of gaining a higher level of experiences of self-esteem. Therefore, men utilise problem-solving techniques instead of blaming themselves. It is argued that women due to their coping mechanism of self-blame, especially after sexual or physical abuse, predisposes them to mental health disorders. University female students, especially migrant female students, are more vulnerable to sexual abuse as they struggle to fit in the UK society. They are therefore more likely to develop mental disorders as they engage in self-blame.

The education regulation in the United Kingdom is also completely different from the migrant students' countries of origin (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011). Language

barriers may also affect how the migrant students view the UK education system. This may lead to poor initial performance which may lead to the development of low self-esteem among the migrant students. Migrant female students are probable to experience feelings regarding low self-confidence which greatly involves age as a factor, due to it having a substantial number of extracted studies (Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012; Shaw, Liang, & Krause, 2010). Age, extensively on the other hand at which self-esteem is at its lowest is during adolescence, or at a time when many international students are experiencing a change of country. The feeling of being a failure may subsequently lead to the development of mental disorders and they are more likely to commit suicide.

Acculturation and the influence of variables on moderating the process are fundamental to this investigation and therefore Berry's theoretical model underpins this study. These variables may give a good indication of factors that influence the ways in which international students fit into their new cultural environment. However, some researchers have moved far from having a list of factors perceived to influence adaptation, and have tried to consider other theories, by using more qualitative methods which help to find out the perceptions of individual students. This study is using a qualitative approach through the use of metaphors, in order to provide more understanding of the unexpressed views and attitudes of international students towards their stay in the UK, and their adaptation.

3.4 Theory of Adaptation

Studies related to student adaptation and mental health problems have benefited from the literature available on migration, which is a valuable source of information on the distress that individuals may experience in moving from one culture to another. Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, and Todman (2008) explain that there are two distinct perspectives: one is that particular stress-related factors lead to migration, whilst the other proposes that the stress results from the migration experience. The development of theories has led to more emphasis being placed on adaptation and acculturation where sojourners can actively manage the stress that they come into contact with (Zhou et al., 2008).

Kim's Theory is founded on a systems standpoint. Kim (2005) describes cross-cultural adaptation as an aspect of people relocating to a different location which they are not familiar with, and therefore making efforts to ensure a sustainable and functional relationship with their newly exposed environment. An assumption implied by Kim is that the individual is a

system, who, when faced with a new cultural situation, proceeds towards a disequilibrium. The individual then employs a reaction to get the system back into equipoise (see Figure 3.4).

This structure model includes a varied range of interplaying factors, comprising aspects of communication between individuals, their ethnic peers and the host community. In the middle of the model is host communication competence, which an individual needs to develop by being exposed to both host and ethnic personal and social communication. At the core of this model is the factor of communication; that by communicating, it makes life easier and leads to adaptation. Through channels such as interpersonal communication (IC) and mass communication (MC), the individual learns to communicate within a wider environment and begins to understand that environment. As soon as an adequate level of host communication competence has been achieved, the newcomer can develop a capacity for intercultural transformation.

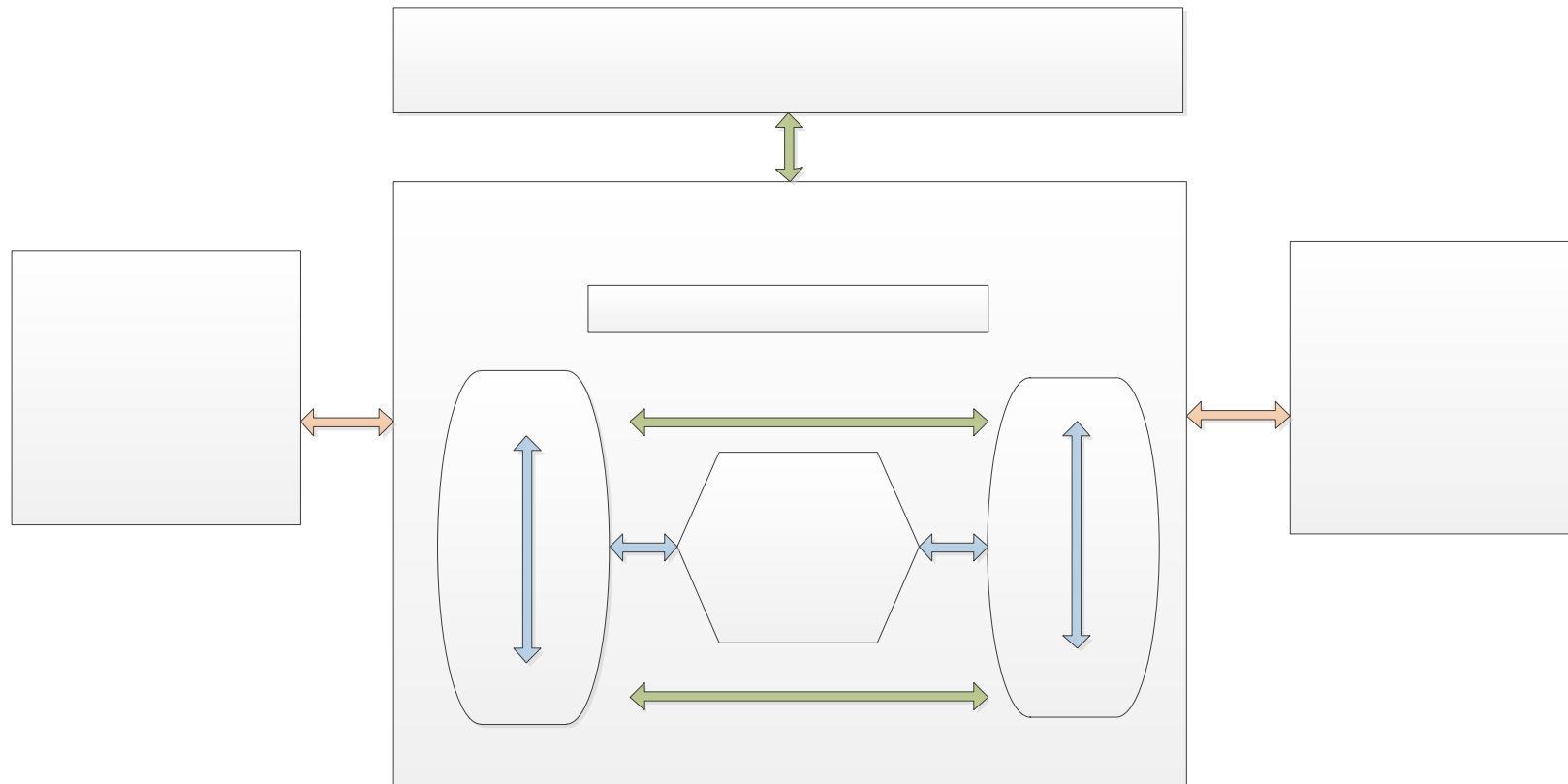


Figure 3.4 Adapted from Kim's (2001) Structure Model of Communication and Cross-cultural Adaptation

3.4.1 The Process Model

The previous description explained how the structural component of Kim's model can help trainers to recognise areas of conflict, and contribute to their possible prevention and resolution in different settings. The process component of Kim's theory includes an evolutionary developmental spiral, as represented in Figure 3.4. Instead of Oberg's "U-curve," Kim's model advocates that adaptation is more cyclical and he focuses on the Stress-Adaptation-Growth model. He argues that the essence of change can deliver a person away from being stressed and direct them to enhance their individual capabilities, which is in effect a positive attribute (Geeraert & Demoulin, 2013; Kim, Suh, Kim, & Gopalan, 2012). They visually demonstrate this through a model that takes into consideration two different steps that might require going backwards in order to advance forward rather than using Oberg's theory.

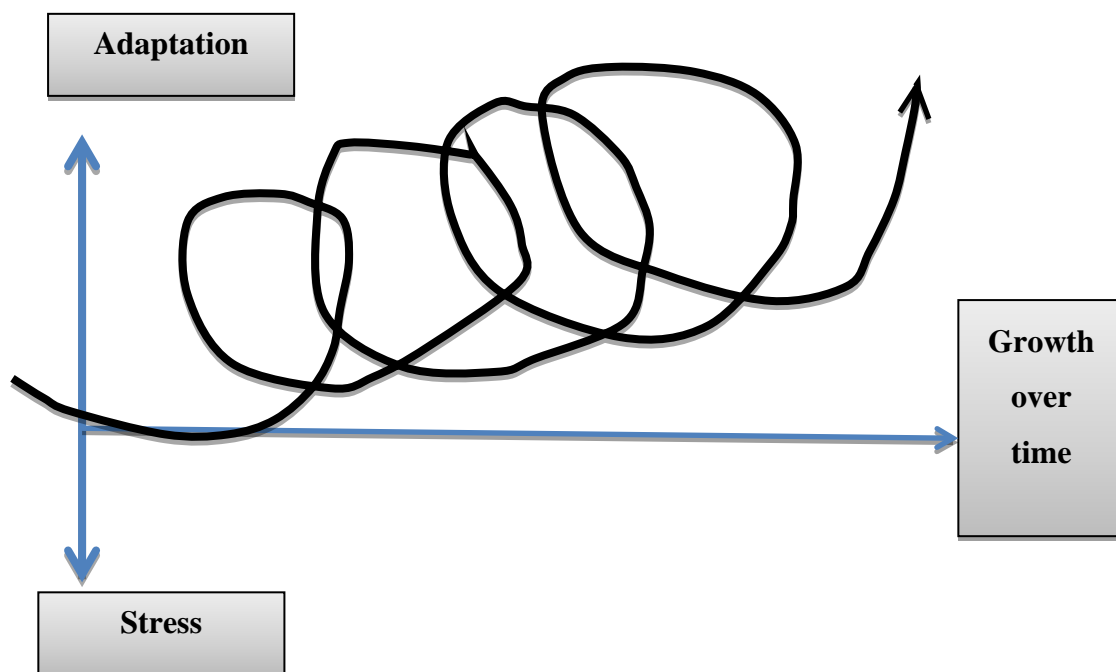


Figure 3.5 Adapted from Kim's Process model

He sees intercultural transformation as a concept whereby individuals learn new things when they adjust to a new culture. People are transformed differently and this transformation occurs through communication. Kim identifies this kind of travel across cultures as empowering and he views it as a positive process (Kim et al., 2012). In contrast to the

previous approaches, Kim claims that an individual demands to continue communicating with those from their country of origin, now immersed within the new emerging society, as they help to link the new culture. Kim concentrates on the importance of media, as well. Whilst an individual's own-culture media may also serve as a bridge, nonetheless the host culture media, especially news channels, can keep an individual stay up to date with events in their new society (Chen, 2012; Kim, Sohn, Choi, 2011). The individual is made aware of what is happening around him or her and can begin to understand the concerns of the new society.

Ascertaining the impact of this on an individual's experiences can be better assessed by using a qualitative approach through the use of metaphors, which may provide more information on the process of how well students are adapting to their new environment. The stress they feel, and the ways in which they cope with such stress, can be ascertained in different ways through using the two approaches of qualitative and quantitative methods. Feelings can be elicited through metaphors, in a way that they cannot be measured through quantitative scales, especially when they are feelings which may not be easily expressed and this will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

3.5 Intercultural Contact

Models of intercultural contact emanate from social psychology and relate to affect, behaviour and cognition (Zhou et al., 2008). International students need to improve their own ways of adapting to cope with any increasing stresses that come from changes in one's life (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); explain their transactional model of viewing stress arguing that distress comes from not being able to cope with the demands placed upon us. A primary appraisal is the evaluation of how significant the stressor is, whilst a secondary appraisal relates to how such a stressor can be controlled (Cohen, 1984). The stress and coping theory suggests the factors that impact on adjustment are determined by personality and life change as well as social support (Zhou et al., 2008). This implies that some people are better than others in finding the resources within themselves to deal with the demands placed upon them. Additionally, the context of the stress is also significant, whether it comes from an external source, or whether it comes from an accumulation of factors building up within an individual (Lazarus, 1966, 1991).

The behaviour theory (Zhou et al., 2008) is associated with behavioural adjustment and Argyle (1969) argues that people moving countries need to learn social skills that are relevant to the new culture; variables such as information particularly regarding the traditional values,

cultural distance as well as language competence will all have an impact on adjustment. Cognition is the third model (Deaux, 1996; Phinney, 1990) which places more emphasis on cultural identity and cultural similarity between the host country and the sojourner. It has been suggested that cognition interacts with affect and behaviour (Storbeck & Clore, 2007) as thinking determines what individuals do and how they do it. This is shown in the way individuals appraise a situation to determine the stress and whether they have the resources to cope with it; they then carry out an evaluation of the best coping strategies to use (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In terms of this study the theory most relevant to international students coming to the UK is that of affect, where students are more likely to need to find coping strategies which facilitate their stay in the host country and help them to deal with the stressors they encounter. This theory places more focus on psychological well-being (Zhou et al., 2008) and situational factors that can be used to manage stress, such as social support (Adelman, 1988). In using this model the coping strategies used by international students can be explored. Additionally, metaphors used in this study may elicit emotional responses that provide further insight into the stressors that the international students may be experiencing.

3.5.1 Making contact

It is suggested that the teaching methods that students experience in their own country tend to disregard the importance of application of theory (Abukhattala, 2013); for example, language proficiency is not simply being able to pass exams in the language, it is also being able to use the language in a natural context. This may consequently act as a barrier to intercultural contact. Therefore, instead of looking at language by itself in terms of linguistic competence, the emphasis may need to be on the communicative process (Llurda, 2000), which facilitates contact with those in the host country.

In recent decades, mobility across the globe has increased to unprecedented levels due to large-scale access to fast and affordable ways of communication (EUR-Lex, 2011); the liberalisation of many societies has allowed an exchange of populations considered improbable before. Despite the positive potential, the new situation has introduced another problem of a very particular nature. Living in a place different from home can create a stressful situation in which the individual experiences a high emotional pressure (Bhugra, 2004b). Adaptation is never easy, especially because racial, religious, and cultural prejudice is still very much in its place, creating a hard to fit template (Kirmayer et al., 2011). To add to

all that, the individual who is taken outside their usual context can experience a degradation in terms of self-confidence, ultimately seeking exclusion as a way of relief (Bhugra, 2004a).

Until recently, the problem of analysing the emotional response generated by the move between cultures has been under-explored. Nevertheless, recent studies have shown that the problem is a chronic one and deserves extended attention. The concept of culture shock has been brought into the field of psychology and explored in a more methodic way, as discussed earlier. Going even further, institutions which rely on a high influx of people coming from different cultures have developed methodologies of assessment, as well as customised services which facilitate guidance. Consequently, the emotional response of migrants is now better understood and accepted as something more than an isolated phenomenon. As multiculturalism has become an important force shaping our world, the problems which come attached to it can no longer be ignored or treated in a superficial and improvised way. It makes people more aware that extra efforts may be required for making meaningful contact between different cultures.

Intercultural contact has taken a complex array of forms in our modern society. From the simple tourist who is facing a new environment for just a couple of days, to the international student or worker who will be indefinitely relocated for a wide range of time, all of them face different magnitudes of the same problem. This research is focused on international students coming to the United Kingdom for short to medium intervals of time, but the issues are universal to all migrants.

International students who fail to adapt are both a social and an economical problem for their hosting countries (British Council, 2014). As many of these students access a form of education which is tax based, they create a certain degree of dependency for the education providers. Integration in the local culture and in the education system are now treated by university administrators as a matter of customer service and customer satisfaction (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014). Current students are also perceived as future professionals in countries which benefit from the “brain drain” and also in their own countries (Gribble, 2008; Kelly, 2010; Luxon & Peelo, 2009). A student who fails to produce a good academic display due to cross-cultural maladjustment will most likely feel out of place when facing job placement (Ward et al., 2005). In addition, they may not feel any emotional attachment to the country of their studies and this could be a real loss to both the trading and political connections between

the student's homeland as well as the host society in the future. The importance of addressing the key aspects of integration as soon as possible benefits everyone.

3.5.2 Relationships

Researchers have revealed that foreign students have an inclination "to belong to three distinct social networks, each serving a particular psychological function" (Ward et al., 2005, p. 147). The first circle of acquaintances is an obvious one, as it includes fellow compatriots who happen to be enrolled in the same institution, or in another educational institution from the same city. The main function is to "rehearse, express, and affirm culture-of-origin values" (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001, p. 147). The second circle includes colleagues, teachers, counselors, and members of the university staff, in a relationship which is more formal. In the third category we can see in a more obvious way that the lack of integration is able to create a sense of solidarity between foreign students, even those which belong to different nationalities. As a general observation, "[a]lthough International students generally want and need intercultural contact, the ability and willingness to interact meaningfully with host culture peers are largely dependent upon cultural distance" (Ward et al., 2005, p. 148).

The described social networks are used in completely different ways, thus justifying the fact that the emotional response is usually activity dependent. Locals are preferred when information of a practical nature is needed, while co-nationals or other foreigners are sought out as companions or for providing emotional support (Boylan, 2002). The degree of integration and academic success is usually directly proportional with the number of successful contacts established with the local hosts (Hwang, Wang, & Sodanine, 2011). The emotional response is also encouraged in a positive direction if more meaningful connections with the representatives of the local culture are established (Owen & Loomes, 2010). Compatriots can be seen as a refuge against what is unknown, of a foreign nature, or intrusive in the area of personal comfort. The social support hypothesis puts a bigger accent on the quality of the support received through the social networks, rather than on its quantity component (Nahid & Sarkis, 1994; Holahan, Valentiner, Moos, 1995). Nevertheless, both components enhance the ability to generate an appropriate emotional response when facing the challenges of a new culture.

3.5.3 Emotional responses

The broad range of problematic emotional responses can be separated into two main categories: conflicts with others and conflicts with the self, according to Zaharna (1989). The contact with others can turn out to be problematic when a sense of continuous mirroring and comparison is being felt; the individual introduced into the new culture feels inferior and hopeless because they are not able to compete on equal terms with what the education system considers to be their peers (Wu et al., 2015). Although the individual might achieve success, that success is often overshadowed by the significant effort invested; this was found to be especially so in the case of Chinese international students (Li, Chen, & Duanmu, 2010). To put it in other words, the competition nurtured by the academic program acts as a constant reminder that at least for a short period of time, the incomer can find themselves at a considerable disadvantage in society.

New evocative situations generate an unfolding of the self never experienced before, which brings on new directions of self-discovery (Phelps, 2014). Identity confusion may be considered to be a main feature of culture shock, as the traditions associated with cultural identity start to unfold and shifts in perspective and behaviour occur (Erickson, 2014). As the new elements of the environment are assimilated through an often difficult and painful process, the question revolves around what will happen with the self once the process draws to some of its conclusions; there is the dilemma that the changes may strip away some of the older existing layers, or that everything will be piled on top. As Phelps argues, the international students are not in the host country simply to gain expertise and a qualification; they are undergoing a transformative experience, with all the challenges associated with that.

Much of the negative tilt of the emotional response related to contact between foreign students and their host culture is given by the fact that the rediscovery of the self puts in danger the only remaining connection with the past and with the initial culture. Alternatively, many international students adopt a dual identity which encompasses more than one cultural and national identity (Vertovec, 2009). However, avoiding the emphasis only on the disadvantages of the emotional impact of migrating to a completely different culture, it is important to point out that a new identity and genuine personal change can be a significant gain; it results in identity transformation that can enhance the competence and perspectives of individuals (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). This is especially relevant to religious identity; the study by Erickson showed that Muslim students in the United States experienced a growth in

their religious engagement; they found that having the freedom to practise in the way that best suited them, they were freed from the restrictions placed upon them by cultural conditioning, and consequently their relationship with Islam grew stronger.

3.5.4 Emotional stability

It is widely recognised that there is a direct relationship between effective learning and the attainment of peace of mind and emotional stability. According to Abarbanel (2009), calmness and measured breathing allows the focus to be on the integration of information. She uses the term ‘emotional support’ to describe what some people manage to craft from their emotional potential. Exposure to various forms of stimuli creates and emotional resilience, which in turn gives the ability to address key barriers of a new surroundings. The author proposes a replacement of the term ‘cultural shock’ with ‘cultural shift’, pointing out that the word ‘shock’ describes a passive attitude in the face of adversity. Abarbanel (2009, p. 1) states that “disengaging from emotional overload to quiet the mind will contribute to improved focus”. It is therefore important for international students to remain as calm as possible when confronted with potential stressors, and to choose the best way for them to cope with such stressors. From this point of view, the key to a successful inter-cultural experience resides in the unexplored potential of the individual. Through increased self-awareness, as well as by learning new techniques of relaxation, the individual put in the face of adversity can develop a very effective and long-lasting emotional immunity.

Almost all studies agree that students lack, at least in the initial phase, a plan for learning more about the culture or a way in which they can develop intercultural communication skills (Cohen & Paige, 2005). Thus, the whole experience of living and studying abroad might be compromised if this is not addressed as soon as possible. It is encouraging to know that almost all education institutions which host foreign students, both in the U.K., and elsewhere in the world, have dedicated important resources in developing multiple methodologies for adapting teaching to cultural backgrounds (Bar-Yam, Rhoades, Sweeney, Kaput, & Bar-Yam, 2002). Such ventures may go some way to helping international students feel more comfortable in their new surroundings and to achieving the emotional stability they need to ensure they gain from their international experience.

3.6 Socio-Cultural Adaptation

In adapting to a new host country migrants are expected to assimilate into the new society. Whether the expatriate has entered the new society for work or academic purposes, they need to successfully integrate themselves into the new society. A negative correlation has been obtained between acculturative stress and adaptation (Mamood, 2014). Conversely, it has been shown that increased competency across adaptation subscales leads to decreased levels of stress among students and higher level of college satisfaction (Zhao, 2010). The core competencies that have been studied that show a strong correlation to one's ability to adapt to a new country are academic performance, interactive and developing communication skills, personal interests and transparency of sharing or being part of a community, ecological adaptation, and more importantly the inclusion of language proficiency (Mahmood, 2014). These factors influence one's levels of stress and success individually, as well as work together to form a coherent rubric of factors needed to succeed at fully adapting to a new society.

3.6.1 Academic Performance

A metric to successfully gauge how migrants adjust to their new surroundings includes how well they adapt to performance-based areas such as their academic studies. Cultural changes in education can make adjusting to a new setting more difficult. In Asian classrooms the teaching is more teacher-centric and when the Asian students are put into a western classroom, they may feel they are in an alien environment as there is much more interaction with the students, and consequently they may feel isolated from their peers (Zhao, 2010). As a result many international students tend to experience depression, which Zhao states leads to a lack of concentration and a low level of motivation to be effectively involved in their studies or socialising; these symptoms lead to poor performance and, if the student does not adjust to their host country, they may quit altogether.

Adjusting to the host country is crucial for success in performance-based areas of adaptation. If an international student cannot communicate successfully with peers or professors or learn to comfortably interact socially, they will fail, as Zhao indicates. Wilson (2013) studied behaviour with the Subjective Adjustment Scale (SAS) and found a medium-sized correlation between Academic/Work Performance and SAS Work Adjustments, providing support that behavioural skill acquisition and adaptation occurs within a contextual performance environment. He also found a strong connection between behaviour and performance in a

new country. This shows the importance of adaptation in academic performance and achievement, and this is why an understanding of the experiences of international students is essential, so that best efforts can be made to ensure their adaptation is as seamless as possible.

3.6.2 Interpersonal Communication

It has been thought that adaptation to a new country is more of a social process than merely a psychological process. Variables such as identity as well as social cognition have provided better frameworks for the study of socio-cultural adaption than studies only focusing on psychological adaption factors (Mamood, 2014). According to him individuals who developed skills that allowed better interpersonal and intergroup relations, such as cultural knowledge, social skills, and language abilities adapted better.

A direct correlation was found between students who struggled with language barriers and their abilities to form relationships with their peers. Those who are only in the country temporarily, usually for academic purposes, do not place a strong desire to learn the language or develop lasting relationships, Mamood (2014) found. However, he also found that language competency is an important factor in achieving interpersonal relationships and, if a migrant wants to develop these relationships, they must become familiar with the language or languages spoken.

3.6.3 Personal Interests and Community Involvement

Several behavioural adjustments need to be made by migrants in order to successfully adapt to a host country, many of which stem from their own interests as well as interests in the community. A correlation is drawn between how well one adjusts to a new environment and how well a migrant understands the new society they are exposed to. Long-term psychological adjustments are related to socio-cultural adaptations (Zhao, 2010); he suggests these adjustments include the migrant's development of intergroup relations, interpersonal, social skills, family and community relations, as well as personal interests such as their self-esteem, identity consolidation, wellbeing, and satisfaction tied into cultural knowledge.

In order to achieve long-term benefits of adaptation with regards to personal and community interests a migrant needs to become interested in participating in the community. Use of the SCAS-R scale shows a strong correlation between maintaining one's personal interests and becoming involved with the host society (Wilson, 2013). However, community involvement is dependent on linguistic and communication skills as a lack of confidence or competency

often leads to misunderstandings or acts as a barrier to fully integrating oneself into the host country's society, according to Wilson. He argues that participating in familiar ethnic communities provides a migrant with better psychological well-being and cross-cultural outcomes and can lead to a broader involvement with the community of the host country.

Research has shown that migrant students face discrimination more than domestic students (Mamood, 2014). Facing discrimination would discourage the desire to assimilate into a new society and may explain why it is preferred, at least at first, for migrants to seek out communities comprised of their own ethnicities. Mamood (2014) results show an intolerance which occurred both inside as well as occurring anywhere else outside the learning environment and it also ran from being ignored and excluded to facing verbal insults and confrontations making adaptation harder and lead to psychological distress.

3.6.4 Ecological Adaptation

Behavioural adaptation has been shown to have a weaker correlation to ecological factors than other socio-cultural adaptation factors. Bronfenbrenner (1994) outlined four core ecological contexts that may provide a better understanding of how ecological factors influence socio-cultural adaptations. These factors are micro system, a migrant's immediate proximity such as their home and work; mesosystem, the relationships a migrant has in these settings such as co-workers, family, and friends; exosystem, formal and informal societal structures including the government, media, and infrastructure; and macro system, which pertains to society at large in regards to ideologies, regulations, laws, and cultural values and norms (Wilson, 2013). These four factors can be applied to the SCAS-R model and provide a better understanding of adaptation than the broader, weaker-correlated ecological factors.

It has been shown that having a way for international students to be mentored by their host country peers has made the transition to adapting to the new society easier than those who did not participate in such mentorship programs. Peer mentors provided overseas students with an increased level of psycho-social support over those students who had traditional mentors (Wilson, 2011). Peer mentors were found to offer their assistance with emotional support, as well as greatly motivate their peers through social support, than those who were not peer mentors (Wilson, 2011).

3.6.5 Language Proficiency

As previously stated, proficiency in a foreign language provides a basis for success in interacting with the host country's population. Lack of language proficiencies has led to graduate students feeling overwhelmed by their coursework and a failure at meeting their professor's expectations (Mamood, 2014). It is therefore essential that all efforts must be made to improve language competencies to a level that ensures international students can feel comfortable in their academic communications.

Of the international university students analysed, those who were forced to participate in ESL courses had an increased difficulty in adapting to the host country than those students who did not have to take the courses (Mamood, 2014). He found that those who rated their English proficiency as 'low' were found to have a more difficult time adapting than those who rated their English skills as 'high'. Many international students do not admit that they do not understand what is being said in English, merely nodding along out of politeness (Wilson, 2011). A study conducted in 2003 also showed a direct correlation between international students' lack of comprehension of the English language and an increase in acculturative distress over those international students who were proficient in English (Wilson, 2011).

In determining how prepared international students are for studying in a host country where English is the primary language students were asked to assess their English skills; they were also asked whether or not they were required to take ESL courses. The students represented 26 different countries and 74% of respondents had rated their English as "good" or "better"; however, 84% were required to participate in ESL courses (Wilson, 2011). Fifty-six percent demonstrated to not only have a mentor but also did not have a family or friendship; therefore, most international students are not fully prepared to successfully assimilate into English-speaking countries and are subject to stressors. The lack of language comprehension has been shown to lead to stressors and failures among those adapting to a host country in terms of academic studies, as well as forming relationships and accomplishing studies or work.

3.7 The three theories that were utilised and drive this study

Weinreich (2008) suggests the term 'enculturation' as more applicable than 'acculturation'; he alleges that, although the term 'acculturation' has been extensively employed in academic cross-cultural literature as an orientation to an acceptance of marginal cultures, as well as the

majority culture, it still carries a strong connotation of acculturating towards the mainstream culture; this is by losing the heritage culture to obtain aspects of the obtained culture (Weinreich, 2008).

As part of this argument, Berry has placed an emphasis on the individual level and on the actor going through acculturation. However, it is essential to keep the macro level in mind, and show the institutional and structural powers, which affect the individual in public, as it is infeasible to note the individual as an isolated actor, when it comes to reviewing acculturating into a new culture. Berry advanced his term 'acculturation stress' as a response to the term 'culture shock'. It is vital to notice that acculturation stress refers only to those stressors which are related specifically with the acculturation procedure. Frequently a specific group of attitudes is connected with acculturation that can be observed as stress symptoms, such as anxiety, feelings, depression, of marginality and alienation (Zheng & Berry, 1991). However, some people see acculturative changes not as stressors, but as opportunities, and hence the acculturation experience can also be a positive one. Such factors were mentioned by Zheng and Berry (1991) as key for the development of acculturative stress. This study utilised this theory to measure the variables relevant to adaptation, as illustrated in the theoretical model formulated in Figure 3.6.

As discussed above, culture shock can be a very tough and challenging experience, a complicated way to cultural adaptation. Some experts argue that the development of accommodating and adjusting to an unfamiliar setting cannot be as uncomplicated as the U-curve envisions (Pedersen, 1995). They argue that it is unmanageable or, at the very minimum, very rare to attain a level of effortlessness in more than one culture, hence envisioning cultural adaptation in the form of a U-curve is wrong. They propose a J-curve as a more appropriate model, which explains the actual process of cultural adaptation. A J-curve is visualising the progress of individuals, who do not or cannot move forward from the reintegration stage. This pattern shows that individuals are fluent in their home cultures, and reach a certain level of adaptation and fluency in their host cultures, but argue the possibility of reaching equality between the home and host culture. People are culture-connected, which means that they are products of the cultures they were born into. According to that, multicultural identity is reached when an individual ignores their unfamiliar surroundings through the prism of their home culture. Summing up, culture shock is a complex phenomenon and, although researchers can attempt to categorise people's experiences into

diverse stages, or judge their level of adaption by looking at their behaviour, it is difficult to provide a specific response as to how long the process of adaptation lasts, and impossible to ensure that regression to previous stages of culture shock will not take place.

3.7.1 Adaptation

It has been suggested that it may be possible to accomplish long-term adaptation, as a result of trying to cope with acculturation. It has been argued that adaptation should no longer mean a better adjustment between the individual and society, nor imply that the individual has altered to become more like the society, e.g. by assimilating. Adaptation is observed as an outcome that can be both positive and negative. However, the term adaptation appears to most often denote a positive feature of the concept, denoting well-adapted individuals. The normative term was considered that there will be different expectations about behaviour in different contexts and thus it is complicated to outline what well-adapted means. Ward's concepts of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation are categorised as the two concepts which are most likely to describe positive adaptation. The difference between the definitions of psychological socio-cultural adaptation can be recognised as that psychological adaptation comprises mostly of an individual's mental health, psychological wellbeing, as well as their physical condition, while in contrast the adaptation of socio-cultural is about the capability to achieve daily life routine in a newly exposed environment. Zhou et al. (2008) connect the socio-cultural adaptation with culture learning, while psychological adaptation is connected with the stress and coping approach. Experts and researchers in psychology emphasise that good social support is needed; and socio-cultural adaptation is associated with cultural knowledge, attitudes, and the degree of contact with the new culture. Whilst good psychological adaptation is associated with personal characteristics and traits, it can be concluded that the link in both psychological health as well as adaptation of socio-cultural adaptation or adjustment is ambiguous. For instance, there are individuals who adapt well to the new culture and new learning system (socio-culturally adapted), however, they fail to adapt to their situation psychologically (Zhou et al., 2008). It was therefore concluded that the three aforementioned theories were the applicable theories, which could be adopted and adapted to formulate the theoretical frame work which drives this study.

3.8 A Theoretical Model

Having taken into account the theories and models that could provide a framework for this study, it is proposed that the following model be used (Figure 3.6). There have been four

main reasons for selecting the seven predictor variables to be used (social support, coping strategy, religious problem solving, socio-culture adaptation, coping flexibility, cultural stress and acculturation). The first of these is attributed to literature suggesting that these specific variables can be relied upon to show significant results when researching students studying abroad (Sterling, Hendrikz, & Kenardy, 2011; Thomas & Choi, 2006; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). Secondly, after having evaluated Berry's model, Oberg's theory and Kim's theory, these variables were identified as being the most relevant for this study and can be fitted into these three theories as shown in Figure 3.6. Thirdly, the eight pre-existing instruments used to measure these variables were widely used by other researchers and were the most recommended. In addition, they had already been tested for reliability and validity, and were simply adapted for investigating this study. The final reason is that this study may be considered unique in that it is the first to address both international and UK students in using these variables. Accordingly, the researcher can infer from existing literature that these eight variables in the theoretical framework are more workable than other variables in addressing the research questions.

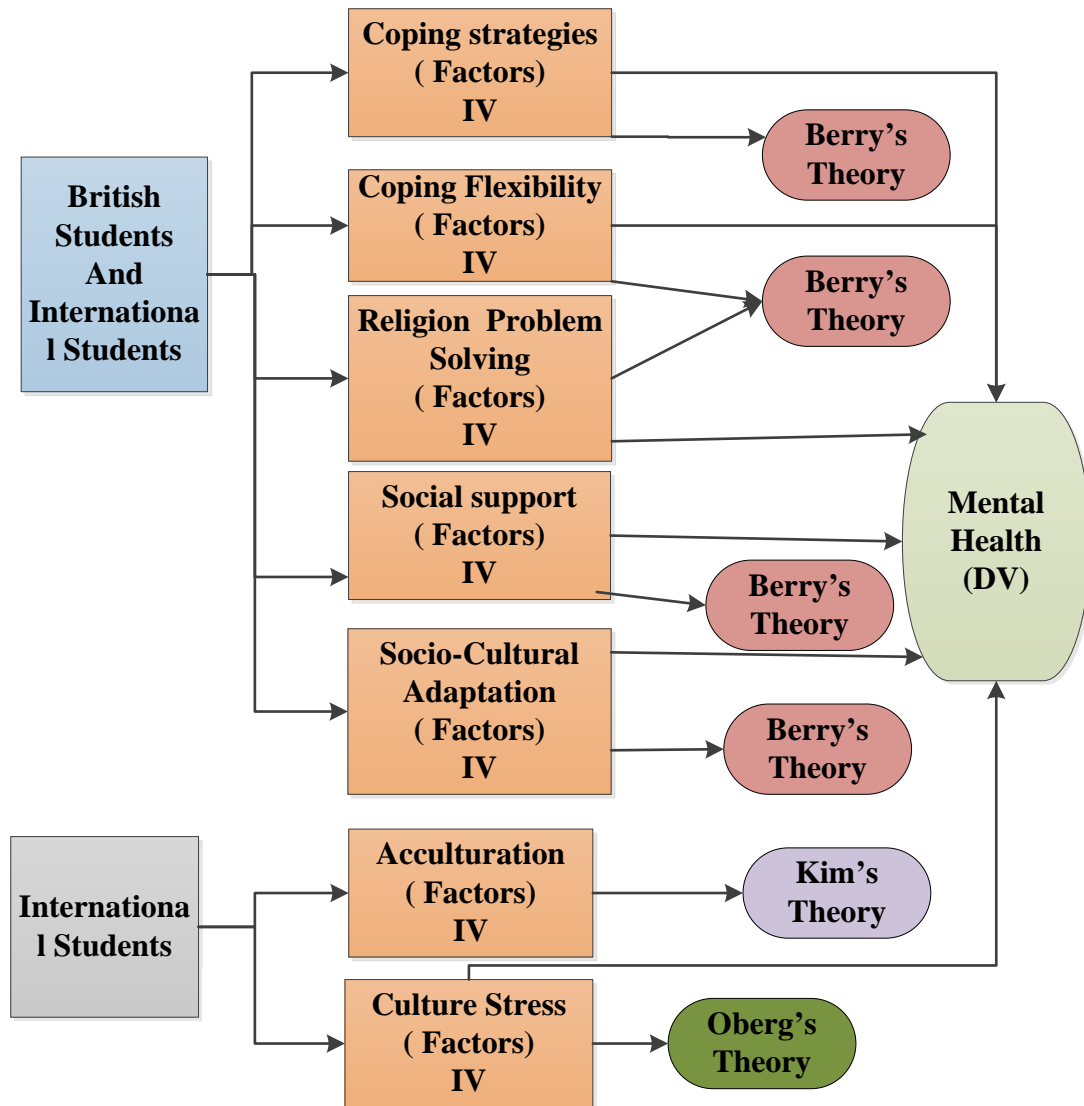


Figure 3.6 A Theoretical Framework

This hypothetical model depicts how different independent variables contribute to mental health readjustment (adaptation). It presents the association between the seven independent variables (social support, coping strategy, religious problem solving, socio-cultural adaptation, coping flexibility, cultural stress and acculturation) that need to be investigated with the dependent variable (mental health) and the impact compared on both international and UK students. The seven predictor variables have been categorised into two main groups; the first five factors of social support, coping strategy, religious problem solving, socio-cultural adaptation and coping flexibility measure the association between these factors and psychological health (the outcome factors) in all students, both UK and international. The second group measures the association between two different independent variables

(acculturation and culture stress) and mental health (the dependent variable) in international students only.

3.9 Summary

Since Oberg first presented his new concept of ‘cultural shock’ as explained by (Oberg, 1960), intercultural communication has now been recently examined for nearly 60 years. Several theoretical frameworks have been introduced over this time. Oberg described a four-stage process for providing a solid foundation for ensuing research studies, and Berry provided the idea of acculturation and managed to override to become it with acculturative stress from being known in the past as culture shock. His four acculturative approaches reveal that there are certain perceptions an individual may have towards the host culture and their own identity, and these can have an impact on acculturation. There are gaps in the literature, for example, on social support and religion, yet it can be brought to attention that social support plays a fundamental part in adaptation and the mental health of many international students studying in the UK. The next chapter describes the methods applied to obtaining data for this study.

4 Chapter Four: Methodology and Pilot Study: Study I

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology utilized in the current research, but focuses on the first study, which was effectively a pilot study. Study I's main research question was:

What is the predictable association between the five independent variables (social support, adaptation, coping flexibility, religious problem solving and coping strategies) and dependent variable mental health in both British and international students?

To address the research question the aim was formulated as follows: to investigate the association and correlation between mental health and psychosocial variables amongst both international and British students at UK universities, in addition to investigating the relationship between mental health and the five following factors: social support, coping flexibility, adaptation, religious problem solving and coping strategies for both international and British students.

The chapter presents the methodology employed for Study I and includes the following aspects: population studied rationale for sampling, selection for the quantitative study, and justification for selecting the three universities as the fieldwork environment. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates the eight questionnaires for data collection, as well as the procedure undertaken to collect data. Finally, the chapter also provides the lessons learned from this Study I (pilot study), and gives the kinds of data analysis employed for this study, before discussion on the findings obtained from this study.

4.2 Research Methodology

Research methodology can be identified as an important action plan to sustain an organized approach towards the research by applying a variety of mixed methods to obtain a targeted outcome (Borrego, Douglas, & Amelink, 2009). The aim is to provide a detailed description, while conducting an evaluation and justifying the use of particular methods (Wellington, 2000). It is good to be able to take note of different theories and perspectives in order to gain more understanding of individuals or of a phenomenon (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By using an exploratory approach to critique the phenomenon under investigation, I was able to gain insights into the challenges that are facing international students in the UK. Through

using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, I was in a better position to gain a deep yet critical understanding of the coping strategies while also witnessing difficulties that those students have experienced. This interpretation attempts to analyse the main relevant reasons why the participants grasp multiple views with different perspectives and thereby provides an overall qualitative approach to the phenomenon.

Mixed methods are used in this research as this suits the exploratory nature of the study, although such methods share both strengths and weaknesses. Mixed methods research is used when more than one qualitative or quantitative technique is used for data collection and analysis (Creswell 2003; Borkan, 2004). I used mixed methods to provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon and so that each method could inform the other, thus providing balanced and reliable information (see Figure 4.1). Various reasons exist why there is a need for using a combination of methods. The use of mixed methods also helps to balance any potential flaws of one method's weakness compared to another (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Having two methods can also help limit any biases that might occur when there is only one method being used. A mixed methods design in psychology research has been well established and has been promoted especially by Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson (1994) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). Indeed, Denscombe (2003) stated that it is advantageous to use a combination of methods, as the different perspectives can be used to compare and contrast. It has been found that mixed methods studies are of particular value in investigating a variety of psychological research areas among different societies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). That is why I have used a set of self-report questionnaires (i.e. a quantitative research technique) as well as in-depth semi-structured interviews (i.e. a qualitative research technique) to integrate qualitative and quantitative findings collected in a cross-cultural context.

Greene (1998) as well as Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher, & Pérez-Prado (2003), suggest that there are five good reasons for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Their suggestions are that it provides an opportunity for triangulation, and this improves the accuracy of the data; it completes a picture of the problem being investigated as it obtains data from different sources; one set of findings helps to develop and inform the other set; it gives an opportunity for studying any contradictions in the data; and finally, it helps to expand the range of the investigation. The most obvious purpose for utilizing mixed methods within this unique research study carries an importance whereby the research problem produces seven different research questions. Each of these questions lends itself to a slightly

different approach; some are more general and can be answered by using quantitative methods, but others require more explanations which are likely to come from qualitative methods.

Mixed Methods Research Designs

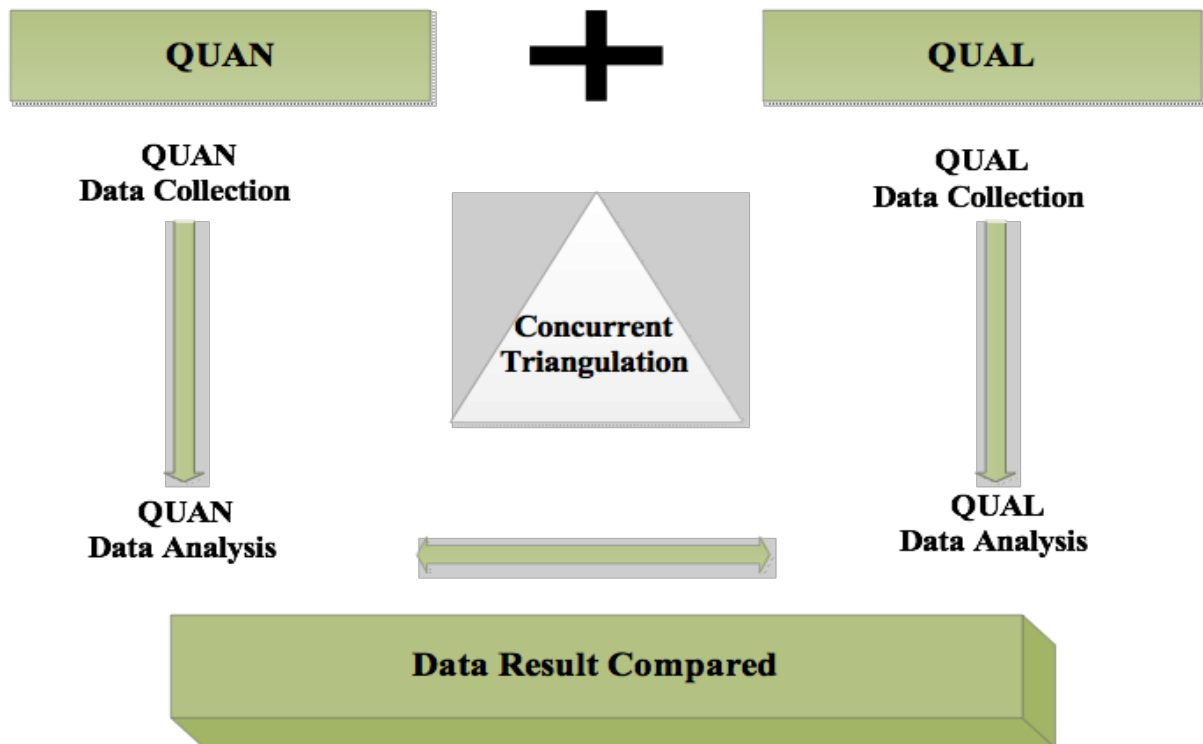


Figure 4.1 Quantitative and Qualitative interpretation

The research questions mainly determine which methods are to be used. I adopted two research instruments: two questionnaires and a semi-structured interview. In particular, the current study followed a specific methodological approach that combines multiple methods together into one design (Creswell, 2003) where the quantitative and the qualitative stages of the research were critically carried out in sequence. The steps which involved quantitative approaches were provided by conducting the questionnaire, while in terms of the qualitative steps the semi-structured interview was used. The questionnaires were administered first, followed by the semi-structured interviews with the participants.

It can be concluded that the research philosophy was specifically selected for realistically achieving the aims of this study, by involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The research strategy was a concurrent triangulation that was made up of mixed methods, utilizing a questionnaire to reveal quantitative key factors that are relevant for further analysis – Pilot study (Study I) and Main Study (Study II) – and one-on-one, critically detailed, interviews that follow a semi-structured approach that highlights relevant qualitative aspects (Study III).

4.3 Pilot Study (Study I): A study I to examine psychometric properties of the measures

The primary goal of this present study includes an exploration of psychometric properties that can be measured, including validity and reliability. The findings from this pilot study were then used to explore the research questions of the overall project and present the aims and objectives for Study II, which is the core study. The results from the initial study were used to test the association between the variables of coping styles and support seeking behaviours in international students and how this impacted on adjustment and psychological well-being. In addition, the pilot study helped to explore mental health issues and related factors in international students compared to their resident counterparts, which therefore permitted an in-depth investigation to take place and reveal any possible area that showed substantial differences or similarities in students away from their familiar environment. The key findings of the pilot study are reported and show how the pilot study has led to the main study.

4.3.1 Aims and Objectives of Study I

Students are faced by numerous challenges when travelling to foreign lands mainly for educational purposes; this is where the culture of their initial place of birth differs considerably from the newly adopted country. Interestingly, it is these barriers that should be deeply considered when one immerses oneself in a new culture therefore having a detrimental effect on the individual's wellbeing, as well as impacting upon their academic achievements and capabilities, while taking into account their physical condition (Ward et al., 2005). There exists a much concern regarding student's mental health, due to an overwhelming statistical increase of mental health issues among students (Pinkney, 2013); this affects both home as well as international students. There are, however, different issues related to international students and this study explores the challenges faced by such students attending UK universities, as research clearly seeks to uncover the mental wellbeing and coping strategies of overseas students who are studying at UK Universities. Furthermore, it focuses on the challenges faced by Arab and Non-Arab students compared to resident students. The Arab

market is a growing area in UK universities and is likely to continue as the number of Arab students within higher education institutes is increasing rapidly. Figures for 2011-2012 show that Saudi Arabia alone sent nearly 10,000 students to the UK (UKCISA, 2012). It is therefore important to have an understanding of the issues faced in a country with different traditional values, languages barriers and cultures; differences in religion, food, and the position of women are all challenges to Saudi students in the UK. The specific objectives of this pilot study were:

- 1- To investigate the validity and reliability of the measures used in this research project.
- 2- To examine the relevant significant links between mental health variables and coping strategies with reference to social adjustment and acculturation of international students.
- 3- To investigate potential links between mental health variables and religious problem solving style in international students compared to UK students.

From the literature, it was anticipated that there would be certain assumptions that could be made, relating to international students and resident students. There were therefore seven areas to test, which focused on there being significant differences between international and resident students covering over a number of interconnecting variables. The hypotheses on which this research was based gave direction for this pilot study.

4.3.2 Comparison of directional hypotheses and non-directional hypotheses

I was unable to formulate the directional hypothesis due to a lack of strong evidence in the literature, since most of the studies used the non-directional hypothesis; therefore it was viable for this study to formulate non-directional hypotheses in the pilot study (Study I). The next section lists the seven hypotheses which were proposed for testing in the pilot study (Study I).

4.3.3 Hypotheses

4.3.3.1 Hypothesis 1

H0: There are no significant differences between international students and British students on mental health variables.

H1: There are significant differences between international students and British students on mental health variables.

4.3.3.2 Hypothesis 2

H0: There are no significant differences between international and British students on coping strategies.

H1: There are significant differences between international and British students on coping strategies.

4.3.3.3 Hypothesis 3

H0: There are no significant differences between international and British students on social-cultural adaptation.

H1: There are significant differences between international and British students on social-cultural adaptation. .

4.3.3.4 Hypothesis 4

H0: There are no significant differences between international students and British students on coping flexibility.

H1: There are significant differences between international students and British students on coping flexibility.

4.3.3.5 Hypothesis 5

H0: There are no significant differences between Arab and Non-Arab students on cultural stress.

H1: There are significant differences between Arab and Non-Arab students on cultural stress.

4.3.3.6 Hypothesis 6

H0: There are no significant differences between Arab and Non-Arab students on cultural stress.

H1: There are significant differences between international and British students on religious problem solving.

4.3.3.7 Hypothesis 7

H0: The parameters being deployed within this research are neither valid nor reliable.

H1: The parameters being deployed within this research are both valid and reliable.

4.4 Rationale for the pilot study (Study I)

Having implemented a concurrent triangulation mixed methods design, I conducted a pilot study for the quantitative phase only. Carrying out a pilot study alerts a researcher to any problems that may be encountered in the main study (Byrman, 2012), which enables the researcher to amend as much as possible any misconceptions that might emerge in the main study.

There are several reasons for undertaking a pilot study:

1. To assess the feasibility of environmental fieldwork.
2. To establish the efficiency of sampling technique.
3. To establish questionnaire-completion times and response rate for this study.
4. To assess the likely success of the proposed recruitment approaches for the potential participants.
5. To identify potential practical problems including any obstacles in recruiting participants.
6. To evaluate the validity and reliability for each questionnaire individually.
7. To collect data and conduct preliminary descriptive and inferential analyses of the data.

4.4.1 Research Design

The study includes quantitative research, which was carried out in different stages. First, the validity and reliability of the measures were examined. Next, an initial study was conducted to find out if there might be relevant variances that demand critical attention and similarities between international students and UK students in terms of variables measured. Questionnaires were distributed manually and also were available online. Three universities were targeted; they were the University of Bedfordshire, Leicester University and Coventry University.

4.4.2 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted via both online and manual questionnaires (see Appendix 9 Table 1 for further details). Participants filled in a consent form and signed it first and then completed self-report questionnaires. The instruments used for the data collections were as follows.

4.4.2.1 Cultural stress (CS-8)

The Cultural Stress Scale was developed after recognition of the stress factors in students travelling to other countries to study at universities abroad; therefore it is very appropriate for use in this study. Eight culture stress items were rated by respondents on a measure of 0 to 3, from 'Not at all' to 'Very much'. Thomson et al. (2006) showed how cultural stress could be judged through using eight different items which measured individual's perceptions when facing culturally challenging situations involved when staying in a new environment away from their home. A set of cultural dimensions was used with reference to Hofstede and McGrae (1997) as the most well-known researcher in this field. This scale was shown to have high levels of internal consistency across the samples (internal validation), which was tested for validation by Hofstede and McGrae (1997). It has been chosen because it measures the cultural stress that students undergo when travelling to another country for study.

4.4.2.2 General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)

GHQ has 12 items and is rated by involving a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from one to four. It is divided into four subscales measuring social dysfunction, anxiety, somatic symptoms and severe depression. The scale was tested for validity and reliability and it has been translated into more than 38 diverse languages (Goldberg & Williams, 1988).

4.4.2.3 Social-Cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS-18)

Ward et al. (1999) introduced the social-cultural adaptation scale from a modified version of the Social-Cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) by Searle and Ward (1990) and include 40 statements. It has been designed to measure both behaviour and cognition related to cross-cultural adjustment among international travellers. Ward and Kennedy (1999) based their psychometric analysis on a total of 16 cross-sectional samples and found (SCAS) to be sufficiently reliable. Also, SCAS is flexible and can be easily modified if needed. Simic-Yamashita and Tanaka (2010) suggested 25 items which were relevant to international students and 18 of these items were found to be appropriate for measuring socio cultural adaptation. Interestingly, eighteen items have been rated by respondents on a scale of one to five, from 'No difficulty' to 'Extreme difficulty'. The scale focuses on language ability and a willingness to communicate as a need for social interaction. The reason this scale was chosen was because of its high validity and wide usage among different researchers (Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

4.4.2.4 Religious Problem-Solving Styles Scale (RPS-18)

Three styles of religious problem solving have been identified, namely collaborative (where the individual works with God to solve the problem), self-directing (where the individual takes on the full responsibility for solving the problem), and deferring (where the full responsibility for solving the problem depends to God). Given this scale was highly validated and tested for reliability by Blanton and Morris's work (1999), this was the main reason to chose and employe it in this study. This scale has 18 items which are rated by respondents on a scale of 1 to 5, from 'Never' to 'Always', and is based on Fox, Blanton, and Morris's work (1999).

4.4.2.5 Brief Cope Scale (Cope-28)

Carver's Brief Cope scale (1997) has 28 items and is rated on a 4-point Likert scale. It measures and assesses both situational and dispositional coping styles. It is a questionnaire that is for self-reporting which is used for assessing the different coping behaviors of individuals and how they respond in particular situations. There are 14 subscales comprising active coping, use of substance, denial, use of instrument support, self-blame, self-distraction, use of emotional support, venting, religion, acceptance, behavioral disagreement, planning, humor, and positive reframing. After a situational specific scenario, 28 coping behaviors are rated by the respondents on a scale of one to four, from 'I haven't done this at all' to 'I have done this a lot'. The reason behind using the Brief Cope scale is that is a well-known scale and has high validity and wide usage among different researchers (Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

4.4.2.6 Sojourner Social Support Scale (SSS-18)

Ong and Ward (2005) also developed a scale for sojourners, which they called 'The Index of Sojourner Social Support'. This has 18 statements relating to helpful behaviors that might make a stay in another country easier. It differentiates between socio-emotional and instrumental support and there is evidence that it is a reliable and cross-culturally valid instrument, as it has been widely used and tested (Noroozi, Ghofranipour, Heydamia, Nabipour, & Shokravi, 2011; Pedersen, Neighbours, Larimer, & Lee, 2011). Respondents are required to rate the extent of which they would agree with the items in the questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale (from 'not at all' to 'completely'). These include statements indicating socio-emotional support (mainly human support) and those for instrumental support (mainly documented information). I have chosen this scale because it focuses on the extent of social

support received by students and it has been validated (Noroozi et al., 2011; Pedersen et al., 2011).

4.4.2.7 Coping Flexibility Scale (CFS-10)

The Coping Flexibility Scale 10 was designed to show that a particular coping strategy can be discontinued if it is found to be ineffective, and a more suitable strategy can be put in place. It was found by Kato (2012) that such flexible coping leads to more adaptive outcomes and can be positively associated with improving psychological health. The scale can provide more information on the measurement of coping flexibility that has not been captured in other approaches; it is rated by respondents on a 5-point Likert scale, from 'Very applicable' to 'Not applicable'. I have chosen this scale as it is especially relevant to the international respondents and it may provide information on how different nationalities adapt their coping strategies. In addition, this scale has been validated and tested for reliability by Kato (2012).

4.4.2.8 Three Assimilation Indices (Acculturation) (Cochrane, 1993)

Three Assimilation Indices contain three different categories and measure acculturation among immigrants, concentrating on factual points of feedback on assimilation rather than desirable attributes. The indices include the Cultural Assimilation Index, which consists of 11 questions measuring customs and habits, the Identification Assimilation Index which measures identity and belonging and consists of 15 questions and the Structural Assimilation Index which measures social contacts. This scale has been validated and tested for reliability by Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik (2010).

4.4.3 Participants

The target of the sample size of the current study targeted both international and British students studying at UK universities and this population was based on accessibility. It is acknowledged that a feasible population size is determined by the availability of resources (Lutz, 1982). However, it has been suggested that the larger size of the sample, the better and that a minimum sample size needs to be at least 30 if statistical analysis is to take place (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). For qualitative data the sample size is not as clear and there is no particular calculation. According to Morse (2000), numerous interconnecting variables should be taken in to account; these include the scope of the research and the quality of the information obtained from participants. On occasion there may need to be more than one interview conducted with each participant. Although Bryman (2012) agrees with Morse, he

argues that it can be difficult for new researchers to come to a definitive decision on sample size, due to there being so little consensus among practitioners. However, it is suggested that researchers should at least have some guidelines to work with, and that these should be based on research design and method (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The participants for Study I were recruited from three universities due to their accessibility and their higher number of international students, according to the HESA (2014).

4.4.4 Procedure

Data collection was conducted via two methods: online and under personal supervision. The participants filled in consent forms, signed them, and then completed self-report questionnaires. Despite the fact that the researcher proposed to send questionnaires by email because it is considered to be useful for getting a quick response and it is inexpensive, some participants are likely to automatically label bulk emails as 'spam' and delete them. Using the second method, the researcher went to each of the three universities in different locations at various times to collect data personally, by handing out the questionnaires face to face to potential participants. This stage was implemented after the researcher was granted approval to carry out the fieldwork as part of this study; approval was from the international offices and student unions, which are affiliated to the three universities chosen for conducting the pilot study (Study 1).

4.4.5 Analysis

For quantitative research, SPSS version 21.0 was used for the purpose of analysing the collected data using descriptive statistical analysis as well as inferential statistical analysis which lead the study to choose the normality test as the best statistical form of testing. A series of Pearson correlations was applied to examine the potential inter-correlations among the variables. Independent t-tests as a result were later developed and ANOVA were performed to identify the differences on selected variables to detect specific none-correlation between groups (gender, nationality, etc.). Finally, to explore any link between dependent variables and independent variables a multiple regression was used.

Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012) highly recommended utilizing normality testing (see Table 4.1) to understand how this testing evaluates data and places meaning for meeting the assumption of normality in this study.

Table 4.1 Results of normality test: The K-S test and the Shapiro-Wilk test

Dependent variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a (K-S test)			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
GHQ Values	.234	796	.063	.876	796	.324

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction, b. (GHQ) Genral Health Qustionnire.

4.5 Insights gained from the pilot study

4.5.1 Environment

Conducting the pilot study in the environment of three universities, I recognised that three spaces are considerably workable for conducting fieldwork; due to the facilities I was granted from the relevant offices in the target university. The main lesson learnt from this pilot was that much prior planning needs to take place to ensure that the data collection can be conducted as smoothly as possible. There are also many things that can still go wrong, despite the prior planning: recorders may not work properly, so an extra one should be available; interviewees may not turn up, so more than the target number should be recruited; students may not provide the information expected, so always have an open mind. Another factor is that the measures utilised must be user-friendly so that long explanations are not required; such measures must also be valid in that they provide what they set out to do, so validated measures need to be used. On average 10–15 days were spent in each of the three universities.

4.5.2 Questionnaire-completion rates

The researcher carried out a pilot with three international and three British students at the University of Bedfordshire on Thursday 5 February, 2014 at 1:00 pm to measure the questionnaire-completion rates. They were each given the questionnaire to complete. The international students took on average 45–50 minutes, while the British students took on average 25–30 minutes. Therefore, a maximum time limit was confirmed, fixing the time to 45 and 30 minutes as recommended from previous literature, in particular for the British questionnaire.

4.5.3 Recruitment

Despite some obstacles encountered in the recruitment of participants, I was able to negotiate with some of the gatekeepers to boost the recruitment rate. For example, I used the two

bodies of the international office and the student union in each university to facilitate my visits and this helped in recruitment and gathering the data. Without their support, it would have been more difficult to access the required students.

4.5.4 Travel

The estimated distance between the chosen universities ranged from 40 to 60 miles and took around 1.5 hours to travel to them. To mitigate any unforeseen issues I made the needed effort to ensure that I began my scheduled travelling early, and by doing so I ensured effective communication between potential participants via a telephone call. Therefore, confirming that the research participants at the chosen university were available as per agreement.

4.5.5 Response rate for Study I

It is difficult to estimate a response rate, especially for surveys which are carried out by email. Shosteck and Fairweather (1979) found that questionnaires distributed through the use of the postal services had a response rate ranging from 41% to 80%, whereas questionnaires distributed by hand achieved between 50% and 80%; in effect, there is not much difference between the two. It is suggested that a low response rate can give rise to a sampling bias, in that only certain types of respondents are likely to participate; however, Barlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (1996) found that a lower response rate yielded a more accurate measurement.

The response rate for the pilot study was calculated by the questionnaires which were administrated under personal supervision for the three chosen universities individually and aggregated across all three universities (see Table 4.2 for details). The estimated response rate for each of the three universities was 84% for the University of Bedfordshire, 82% for Leicester University, and 80% for Coventry University. The outstanding figure from the questionnaires completed and also returned came to 79 respondents; hence, an overall response rate of 82% was achieved. The lesson learned from this pilot study was that the main Study II should seek to calculate separate response rates for international students and the British students. However, this study disregarded collecting the response rate for the questionnaires that were collected online due to not being able to recognise how many students received and accessed the online questionnaires and from which universities the respondents submitted the completed questionnaires.

4.5.6 Other lessons learned from the studyI

1. Despite all the pre-existing testing for credibility and meaningfulness as a reliable source showing validity regarding the eight questionnaires, Study I proved that all questionnaires were valid and reliable, according to the results shown in tables 4.3 and 4.4.

2. The final lesson learned from Study I was that two out of three assimilation questionnaires should be excluded (Identification Assimilation Index and Structural Assimilation Index). In addition, the GHQ12 should be replaced by the long one, GHQ 28.

Table 4.2 Response Rate for Questionnaires

Name of University	Number of participants opting out	Number of Incomplete questionnaires	Completed questionnaires			Total of participants	Response Rate
			Male	Female	Total		
Bedfordshire University	7	18	70	43	113	138	82%
Leicester University	4	20	50	50	100	124	81%
Coventry University	6	12	50	40	90	108	84%
Total	17	50	170	133	303	370	82%

4.6 Results from Study I

4.6.1 Demographics

Responses from the online questionnaire included 55 participants; 43 of these were international and 12 UK students. The printed questionnaires elicited more responses (n = 303, 152 international and 151 UK students). In total, 358 individuals studying in UK Universities (195 International students and 163 resident students; with an 83% response rate) completed questionnaires; their age groups were measured in three categories: 18-24, 25-35

and > 35. In total, 358 students were accounted for in Study I, comprising as 190 men including 168 women that took a valued part in the study recognisable as a participant. Most were within the age range 18–35, with just 10 % being over 35. Almost half were undergraduates, and 51% were postgraduate students. The international students were split into two different groups: Arab totalling 110 and Non-Arab totalling 85, making a combined total of 195. (See Table 4.2 for further details.)

Table 4.3 Demographic details of the samples international and British students for Study I (N=358)

Demographic items	Frequency	Percentage	Demographic items	Frequency	Percentage
Age			Gender		
18-24	162	45.3	Male	190	53.1
25-34	158	44.1	Female	168	46.1
Over 35	38	10.6	Education:		
International students	195	54.5	Post graduate	174	48.6
British students	163	45.5	Undergraduate	184	51.6
Arab and Non-Arab:			Ethnicity		
Arab	110	30.7	White British and Other white background	113	31.6
Non- Arab	85	23.7	Middle East – Arab	107	29.9
Type of religion			Other	138	38.5
Christianity	121	33.8			
Islam	146	40.8			
Other	91	25.4			

4.6.1.1 Difference between international students and UK students

As shown in Table 4.3, international students score lower than UK students on variables such as sojourner social support (SSS), whereas international students score higher on variables such as Cope, religious problem solving (RPS), social cultural adaptation scale (SCAS) and coping flexibility scale (CFS). This lends support to the first hypothesis, which identifies a significant difference between international students and resident students regarding mental health variables.

A higher score on SSS shows that the students are more likely to seek help and, as mentioned, the results showed that the international students scored lower than the UK students. The higher score from the international students on Cope indicates that they cannot use coping strategies to cope effectively in the new cultural environment; this was higher than the resident students. It was anticipated to find results that show international students scoring higher on SCAS, and this shows they find difficulties in adapting (SCAS). Table 4.3 provides the results of the t-test.

It was also anticipated that international students would score higher on coping flexibility (CFS). A lower score means that individuals use coping flexibility when dealing with a new culture. The international students did score higher. However, although international students may be more likely to use religion (RPS) to solve their problems and relevance was not found when attempting to show the differences between international and resident students.

Table 4.4 t-test parameters between international students and resident students

	International &British students	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	t-Value	P- Value
CS	International British	195 0	12.56	4.74		
SSS	International British	195 163	49.02 57.17	13.40 15.52	-5.32	.000
GHQ	International British	195 163	23.99 23.77	5.97 6.60	.324	.746
Cope	International British	195 163	65.01 57.87	11.70 14.55	5.14	.000
RPS	International UK	195 16	48.83 43.47	14.97 12.61	3.61	.000
SCAS	International British	195 16	38.60 35.12	13..36 14.20	2.38	.018
CFS	International British	195 163	23.36 21.86	4.84 4.46	2.99	.003
SAI	International British	195 0	23.12	3.13		
CAI	International UK	195 0	29.47	5.20		
IAI	International UK	195 0	25.44	8.95		

Note: RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS=Coping Flexibility Scale; Three assimilation indexes (1- Culture Assimilation Index 2-Identification Assimilation Index.3-Structural Assimilation Index).

4.6.1.2 Arab and Non-Arab Students

Table 4.4 shows that Arab students score higher on variables relating to mental health, such as culture stress (CS) and structural assimilation index (SAI), whereas, non- Arab students score higher on variables relating to mental health culture assimilation index (CAI) and identification assimilation index (IAI). A higher score on CS indicates that the Arab students are suffering a higher level of culture stress. This indicates that there are differences between the international students on the basis of their cultural background.

Table 4.5 t-test parameters between Arab and Non-Arab Students

	Manual & online	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	t-Value	P- Value
CS	Arab	110	13.96	4.44	4.96	.000
	Non-Arab	85	10.75	4.51		
SSS	Arab	110	47.11	12.16	-2.28	.031
	Non-Arab	85	51.49	14.55		
GHQ	Arab	110	24.22	5.54		.538
	Non-Arab	85	23.69	6.50		
Cope	Arab	110	64.47	12.24		.467
	Non-Arab	85	65.70	10.98		
RPS	Arab	110	49.58	16.35	.617	.427
	Non-Arab	85	47.85	13.02		
SCAS	Arab	110	39.30	12.90	-.729	.401
	Non-Arab	85	37.86	13.96		
CFS	Arab	110	23.32	5.06	-.120	.904
	Non-Arab	85	23.41	4.57		
CAI	Arab	110	22.22	2.78	-4.786	.000
	Non-Arab	85	24.28	3.19		
IAI	Arab	110	28.19	5.52	-4.084	.000
	Non-Arab	85	31.14	4.23		
SAI	Arab	110	26.69	9.27	2.23	.027
	Non-Arab	85	23.83	8.31		

Note: RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS=Coping Flexibility Scale; Three assimilation indexes (1- Culture Assimilation Index 2-Identification Assimilation Index.3-Structural Assimilation Index).

4.6.2 Regression analysis

In order to create appropriate model, a number of variables were examined as predictive factors to find if there were any association between them and the dependent variable of

mental health. This was to further test the hypotheses which suggested a potential link between the predictive variables and mental health. A potential model is visible within figure 4.5 and the outcomes in Table 5.6. Significant associations were found between predictive variables (religious problem solving, culture stress, coping flexibility, social support and coping strategy) and the dependent variable (mental health), which may show a direct relationship. The ANOVA table (for further details see Table 5.5) shows the model links between predictors and dependent variable is significant ($F = 14.12$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 5.1).

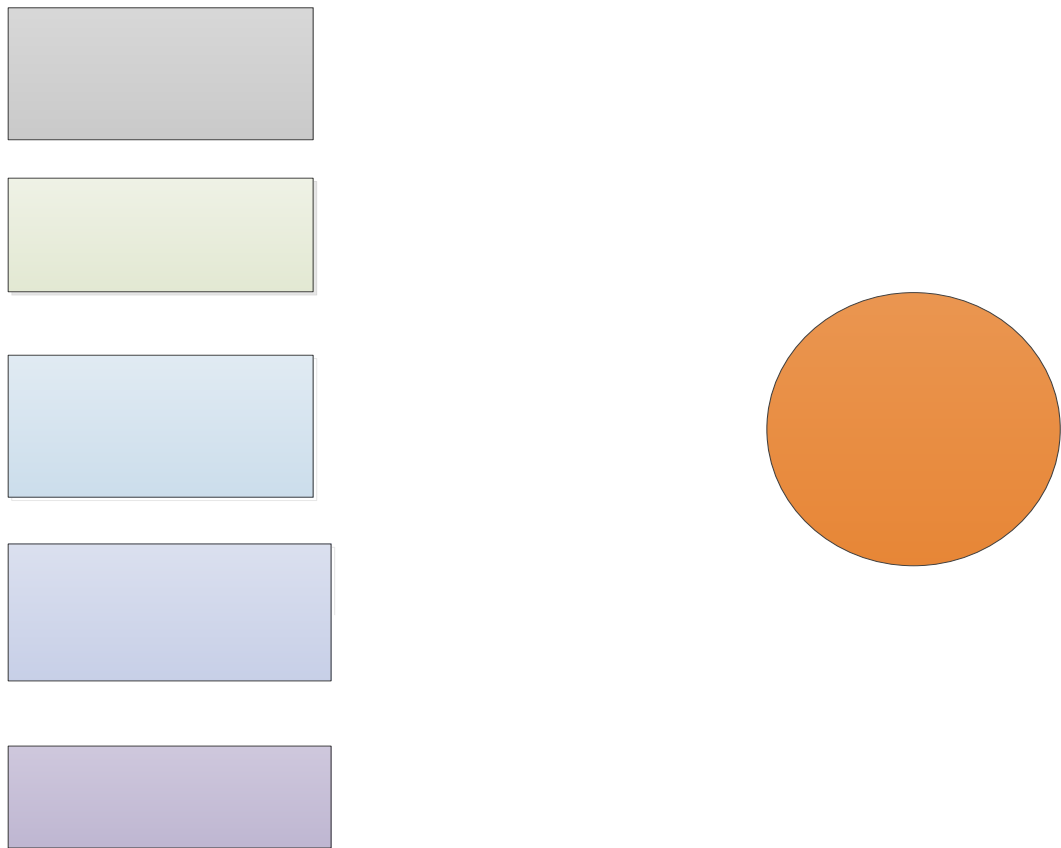


Figure 4.2 The links between predictors and outcome variable

4.6.3 Manual and online questionnaires

Table 4.6 shows 27%, of the total variance as explained in Figure 4-5 with Cope and Coping Flexibility (CF) recording a higher beta value, whereas, Religious Problem Solving (RPS) was insignificant.

Table 4.6 demonstrates t-tests results and descriptive measures between data collected through online and manual questionnaires. The differences might be due to different sample sizes.

Table 4.6 t-test parameters between manual questionnaire and online questionnaire

	Manual & online	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	t-Value	P-Value
CS	Manual	152	11.59	4.63	-5.82	.000
	Online	43	16.00	3.33		
SSS	Manual	303	53.46	14.78	2.17	.031
	Online	55	48.72	15.34		
GHQ	Manual	303	23.91	6.28	.124	.901
	Online	55	23.80	6.17		
Cope	Manual	303	61.66	13.34	-.327	.744
	Online	55	62.30	14.65		
RPS	Manual	303	46.44	14.17	.181	.857
	Online	55	46.07	14.35		
SCAS	Manual	303	37.47	14.18	1.46	.144
	Online	55	34.50	11.59		
CFS	Manual	303	22.75	4.71	.613	.540
	Online	55	22.32	4.81		
CAI	Manual	152	23.15	3.18	.236	.814
	Online	43	23.02	3.01		
IAI	Manual	152	29.92	5.05	2.30	.022
	Online	43	27.88	5.44		
SAI	Manual	152	23.98	9.11	-4.54	.000
	Online	43	30.67	6.03		

Note: RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS=Coping Flexibility Scale; Three assimilation indexes (1- Culture Assimilation Index 2-Identification Assimilation Index.3-Structural Assimilation Index).

4.6.4 Result hypothesis of Study I

4.6.4.1 Hypothesis 1

H0: There are no significant differences between international students and British students on mental health variables.

H.1: There are significant differences between international students and British students on mental health variables.

Table 4.7 Association between international students and British students on mental health variables

	International & UK students	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	F-Value	P-Value
GHQ	International	195	23.99	5.98	.57	.452
	British	163	23.78	6.61		
CFS	International	195	23.36	4.84	.94	.332
	British	163	21.89	4.46		
RPS	International	195	48.83	14.98	5.22	.023
	British	163	43.47	12.61		
Cope	International	195	65.01	11.70	12.87	.000
	British	163	57.87	14.56		
SSS	International	195	49.02	13.40	4.66	.032
	UK	163	57.17	15.53		
SCAS	International	195	38.60	13.36	3.01	.084
	British	163	35.12	14.21		

4.6.4.2 Hypothesis 2

H0: There are no significant differences between international and British students on coping strategies.

H1: There are significant differences between international and British students on coping strategies.

Table 4.8 Two-way ANOVA for answering H0.2

	Level of education	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	F	P-Value
Cope	International	195	65.01	11.70	9.16	.000
	Undergraduate	52	65.61	11.71		
	Postgraduate	143	64.79	11.72		
	British	163	57.87	14.55		
	Undergraduate	122	58.45	14.19		
	Postgraduate	41	56.14	15.65		

4.6.4.3 Hypothesis 3

H0: There are no significant differences between international and British students on social-cultural adaptation.

H1: There are significant differences between international and British students on social-cultural adaptation.

Table 4.9 Two-way ANOVA for answering H0.3

	Gender	N	Mean	Std-Deviation	F	P-Value
SCAS	International	195	38.60	13.36	2.418	.066
	Male	130	38.47	13.50		
	Female	65	38.84	13.17		
	British	163	35.12	14.20		
	Male	60	36.88	14.07		
	Female	103	34.09	14.24		

4.6.4.4 Hypothesis 4

H0: There are no significant differences between international students and British students on coping flexibility.

H1: There are significant differences between international students and British students on coping flexibility.

Table 4.10 t-test for answering H0.4

	International & British	N	Mean	Std-Deviation	T-Value	P-Value
CFS	International	195	23.36	4.84	2.99	.003
	British	163	21.87	4.46		

4.6.4.5 Hypothesis 5

H0: There are no significant differences between Arab and non-Arab students on cultural stress.

H1: There are significant differences between Arab and non-Arab students on cultural stress.

Table 4.11 t-test for answering H 0.5

	Arab & Non-Arab	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	t-Value	P-Value
CS	Arab	110	49.58	16.35	.427	.427
	Non-Arab	85	47.85	13.02		

4.6.4.6 Hypothesis 6

H0: There are no significant differences between international and British students on religious problem solving.

H1: There are significant differences between international and British students on religious problem solving

Table 4.12 Two-way ANOVA H 0.6

	Type of religion	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	F	P-Value
RPS	International	195	48.84	14.97	13.04	.000
	Christianity	35	49.57	13.28		
	Islam	127	49.40	16.07		
	Other	33	49.45	11.60		
	British	163	43.47	12.61		
	Christianity	86	44.69	11.37		
	Islam	19	34.24	8.81		
	Other	58	38.03	9.70		
	T- Christianity	121	49.45	11.90		
	T –Islam	146	49.06	15.38		
	T - Other	91	38.03	11.53		

4.6.4.7 Hypothesis 7

H0: The parameters being deployed within this research neither valid nor reliable.

H1: The parameters being deployed within this research are both valid and reliable.

Table 4.13 Cronbach's Alpha for all measures included in the study

	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)	12	.74	.87
Culture Stress (CS)	8	.75	.79
Brief Cope (Cope)	28	.75	.90
Religious Problem Solving (RPS)	18	.75	.85
Socio-cultural adaptation scales (SCAS)	18	.77	.94
Coping flexibility (CFS)	10	.75	.74
Sojourner social support (SSS)	18	.77	.95
Cultural assimilation index (CAI)	11	.84	.84
Structural assimilation index (SAI)	11	.67	.48
Identification assimilation index (IAI)	15	.72	.67

According to Kline (1999) a Cronbach's Alpha of .69 or below is unacceptable, between .70 and .79 is good, between .80 and .89 is very good and above .90 is excellent. In this study, all instruments used showed an acceptable internal consistency, except for the Structural assimilation index (SAI) and Identification assimilation index (IAI) which had a Cronbach's Alpha value below the acceptable threshold therefore this study were excluded the two scales which scored the Cronbach's Alpha below level 70% . The reason for using Cronbach's Alpha is for estimating the reliability of all scales used in the current study.

4.6.5 Inter-correlations: Validity indices

According to Pavot and Diener (1993), gratitude and embrace of life measures have a strong inter-correlation, with Cronbach's Alpha presented as .85 and in Study I showing the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .89. Table 5.4 shows Pearson correlations between dependent variables have been used in this research. There are significant positive correlations between SSS and CS as well as GHQ and SCAS.

Table 4.14 Intercorrelation between variables

	CS	SSS	GHQ	Cope	T_RPS	SCAS	CFS	CAI	IAI	SAI	
CS	.226	1									
SSS	.449**	.180**	1								
GHQ	.587**	.185**	.083	1							
Cope	.696**	.146**	.015	.421**	1						
RPS	.595**	.209**	-.009	.270**	.375**	1					
SCAS	.493**	.144*	.207*	.433**	.387**	.204**	1				
CFS	.376**	-.092	-.082	.294**	.172**	.192**	.379**	1			
CAI	-.039	.137**	.28	.211*	.042	.182*	.268*	.216**	1		
IAI	.209**	.318**	.141*	.028	.072	-.061	.026	.073	.372**	1	
SAI	.118	.128	.031	.059	.071	-.130	.296**	.195**	.192**	.084	1

Note: N (UK= 163, International students= 195) RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS=Coping Flexibility Scale; Three assimilation indexes (1- Culture Assimilation Index 2-Identification Assimilation Index.3-Structural Assimilation Index). *<.01, **<.001.

Table 4.15 ANOVA parameters

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2068.914	5	413.783	14.115	.000 ^a
	Residual	5540.655	189	29.316		
	Total	7609.569	194			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total Coping Flexibility Scale, Total_ Sojourner Social Support Index, Total_ Cope Scale, Total_ Culture Stress Scale, Total_ Religious Problem-Solvingb. Dependent Variable: Total_ General Health Questionnaire

Table 4.16 Multiple regression parameters

Predictor	Beta	R square	P-value
		.27	
CS	.17		.01**
SSS	.13		.04*
Cope	.32		.000***
RPS	.065		.34
CF	.25		.000***

Figure 4.3 Schematic diagram of model I Moderation

Note: GHQ (General Health Note: RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS=Coping Flexibility Scale. Questionnaire, SSS: Sojourner Social Support, and Cope: Coping Strategies)

4.6.6 Moderator Analysis for study

The moderation for Study I was conducted and calculated between coping strategies, social support factors, and mental health (see tables 4.16 and 4.17 for details). In addition, Figure 4.18 shows simply the interaction between independent variables, moderator and outcome variable.

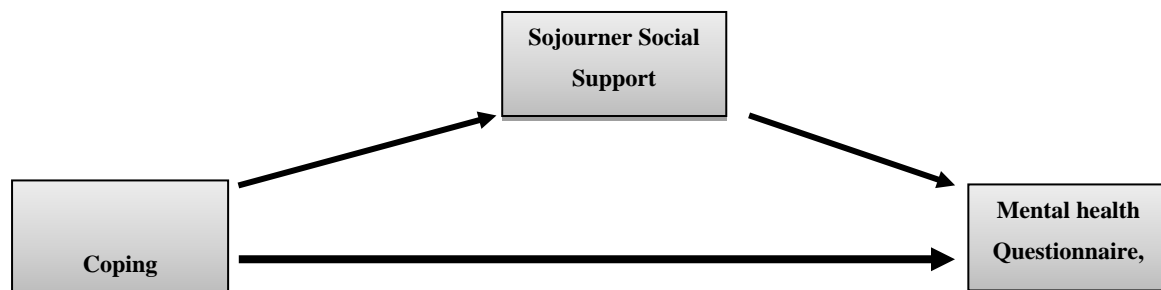


Table 4.17 Moderator Analysis

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Beta ^a	p-value ^a	R ²	Adj R ²	ΔF (p)	Df
GHQ	Model 1						
	SSS	.032	.108	.183	.178	39.761	2, 355
	Cope	.194	.000			.000	

4.7 Discussion for Study I

The results from Study I for international and UK students indicate that international students adapt to the host culture therefore result in a positive outcome as they are enabled to make positive problem solving decisions as well as overcome any form of anxiety or depression. This is supported by Davila and Beck (2002) who found that international students functioned positively to both social and cultural adjustment. Interestingly, it appears that no relevance is visible between UK and international students on levels of mental health issues.

There is limited evidence of both male and female international students having higher levels of social and cultural adaptation than UK students, which would be in line with Virta, Sam, & Westin (2004), Rosenthal et al. (2007) and Sumer (2009), who indicate that cultural and social support is not gender specific. Overseas students were found to have advanced levels of coping flexibility; this kind of flexibility reflects positive and active academic adjustment indicating lower levels of perceived stress. Tuna (2003) and Yalim (2007) confirmed the relationship between coping and adaptation styles as predictors of psychological adjustment, with both studies reflecting lower levels of stress in international students and more acceptances of positive coping strategies. However, Ward et al. (2005) found that international students faced challenges and psychosocial problems in adapting to the new culture.

As reported in this author's paper (Al Saad, 2015), results show that Arab students suffer less cultural stress than non-Arabs. This may be due to the Arab collectivistic culture (Shakibai, 2005) presumably offering more emotional support, although some of the other international students may also come from collectivistic societies. Sen (2008) suggested that Arab students tend to use positive coping skills to reduce any problems related to their academic, social and cultural adjustment as well as acculturative stress. Alazzi and Chiodo's (2006) study also supports this. However, there may be other explanations, such as Saudi clubs being operational in these universities, so that the Arab students can always find others from the same ethnic group to support them.

Positive attitude has been found in the majority of participants who have a great ability in using religion to adjust in the new community. This is supported by both Ghassemzadeh et al. (2002), as well as Al-Solaim and Loewenthal (2011), who found a positive relationship between religion problem-solving and types of religion. They argue that religion helps many university students adapt and solve problems associated with various life situations. The present results indicate strong religious and spiritual beliefs among national and international students (for further details Appendix 9, tables 3–8). The ANOVA table indicates that the study's model is significant. Additionally, the regression results in Table 5.5 show that culture stress, coping flexibility, social support and coping strategy significantly contribute to the dependent variable of mental health, yet it presents non-significance in relationship between religious problem solving and mental health. The results might influence the extent to which international students with psychosocial problems, such as coping flexibility and

culture stress, may be affected in adjusting to their new environment. Ward et al. (2005) emphasized that International students do face challenges in adapting when they enter a new culture (See Appendix 9, Table 8).

The first objective for this pilot study was to test for signs of reliability in the sources and also locate validity within the measures; these have shown that they do measure what they are intended to do, and can therefore be used for answering the questions of this research. The second objective of the study has been met, showing that there are possible connections between both of the following variables: mental health and coping strategies with reference to acculturation and social adaptation of international students. The third objective for Study I was to investigate potential links between mental health variables and religious problem solving; this has not shown that there is an association between mental health variables and religious problem solving, and there may not be represent signs of significance in the difference visible between international and their resident student counterparts in using this as a coping strategy.

From this first study, the measures were seen to be relevant for the project and the variables were selected. As there was no association between religious problem solving and mental health, it was determined that this would be further explored in the main study. Culture stress, coping strategy, coping flexibility and social support indicated an association with mental health and these were variables that needed to be investigated further.

The interaction between coping strategies and mental health and was significant (p -value=.000) when was the adjusted by social support. This results aligned with the previous studies conducted in World Education Fair – Romania by Tamas (2014), which collected data from 231 students and found that social support is effective influence in mental health amongst students studying abroad.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has provided in detail the protocol of Study I, starting with the reasons for conducting this study (Pilot study). It then provided in detail the sampling selection and methods (scales, ethical considerations, procedures, data analysis using SPSS, and discussion) and provided the results of Study I. Having learned lessons from the pilot study, this enabled me to avoid any mistakes when carrying out the main study. Although Study I provided a number of outcomes related to the measuring of psychosocial variables in

connection with mental health, these outcomes enabled me to justify which scales were effective for the main study. Therefore, I proceeded to embark on the main study, Study II. The next chapter discusses Study II in detail.

5 Chapter Five: Quantitative Approach: Study II

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides results from the main quantitative study (Study II) and was conducted in 2015 with a large sample. The methodology for this study is detailed and the research design before the background to the data collection is discussed. This present chapter demonstrates the results that derived from the quantitative research conducted for Study II, which is the main study for this project. For the purposes of building on the key findings from the pilot Study I, this main study provides more detail and focuses on exploring further the variables and coping strategies associated with social adjustment and acculturation of international students. Within this chapter the demographics of the second study are presented, showing ethnicity, religion and socio-demographic information. The chapter then sets out the interaction effect of the variables including gender, having children and family life on the respondents. These findings relate to the research questions, exploring the extent to which specific variables affect acculturation and mental health of international students, compared to UK students. The impact on predicting mental health in both international and UK students is then investigated to determine whether there are significant differences. Finally, there is a discussion about the findings from the quantitative data.

5.2 Participants

Population size is the most critical stage in any research. Importantly, selecting the most appropriate strategy for effective sampling is crucial, especially for quantitative and qualitative researchers (Onwuegbuzie, 2007). In this research, data was collected on an accessibility basis from 796 participants; these were international students and British students from various universities in the UK, including the University of Bedfordshire, Cranfield University, Leicester University, De Montfort University, Coventry University, Middlesex University, the University of Hertfordshire, the University of Birmingham, BPP University and Swansea University. The participants presented different cultures and backgrounds, including the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, the Far East, Africa and South America. The universities selected represented most regions of the UK, and the sample was selected from undergraduate and post-graduate students.

Convenience sampling constituted the sampling strategy I used, as this implies that such students were accessible and consequently relatively easy to contact. There was a clear

decision to sample students across various UK universities, and these students were selected on the basis of different nationalities. The students who were actually able to be contacted were the ones who were conveniently selected for interviewing in this sample.

5.2.1 Recruitment

For the quantitative data collection, I needed to approach the universities to locate suitable respondents who would be seen as contributive participants to the research. In the first instance, I approached the research graduate school (RGS) staff members at the University of Bedfordshire, who sent emails to all students on their database, inviting them to participate. I then contacted the international offices of another nine universities, where I sought their permission to approach their students. As mentioned earlier, these universities were selected as they represented various parts of the UK where there were known to be large numbers of international students. After being given permission to contact the student union at each of the nine universities, I was able to use such resources to send emails to potential participants, advising them of my study and inviting them to participate. In addition to the student unions, I also approached the international clubs at some of these universities, in order that I was able to recruit some ethnic minority groups. I was given much support from the leaders of the Saudi community clubs at these universities, who actively mediated and facilitated the recruitment process on my behalf. They also offered their facilities for conducting the research.

These procedures were all carried out and put in place before the research could commence. Through a strategy such as this, I was able to reach out to a population that may have been hard to reach otherwise. This was an approach that could be identified as snowball sampling, where so-called gatekeepers, or others who had access to the required sample, were able to facilitate the process by spreading the information to potential participants (Cohen & Grifo, 2007). In turn, some of these potential participants were then able to inform their friends of the study and also invite them to participate. In this way I was able to reach a wide selection of the population to carry out the quantitative survey.

Snowball sampling is a non-random sampling method, sometimes referred to as chain referral sampling, as people with the required characteristics for the research are referred by others (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). The first challenge in this approach is finding the initial respondents, and in my case this was relatively easy as I knew they were located in the universities; I was then able to initiate the process by contacting the student unions and the

student international clubs. Having personal contacts in the locations is preferable as they are able to introduce the project to potential respondents or participants and this gains more cooperation; again, I was fortunate in having support from the Saudi clubs, who made arrangements for me to attend their premises.

5.2.2 Variance in the participants of Study II

Having recruited in this study the international students (545), which was more than double the number of British students (251), the increased number of international students was more accidental and due to a number of reasons including the following: there was no bias regarding the distribution of the questionnaires among both groups of students, but the British students were less forthcoming in contributing to this study than the international students. There was no identified reason that could have been recognised for preventing British students from taking part in this study. To prove this stance, see the difference in response rates between international and British students in Table 5.1. However, it should be acknowledged that increasing the number of British students equalling to the number of international students could result in different results than those obtained from the current study. However, this issue is addressed in the limitation of this study.

5.3 Research Design

For the quantitative phase a suitable survey design known as a cross-sectional model was used, and the questionnaire entailed close-ended questions that can be used to provide frequencies and a range of graded opinions.

5.3.1 Materials

A set of questionnaires was employed to collect quantitative data, namely Culture Stress scale (CS), Sojourner Social support (SSS), Religious Problem-Solving (RPS), Brief Cope (COPE), Coping Flexibility Scale (CFS), Social-Cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS), Cultural Assimilation Index (CAI) and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28). From this list of scales, Culture Stress scale (CS) and Cultural Assimilation Index (CAI) were only used for the international students as their content is specific to students who are living in a new culture. Eight scales were used for measuring the mental health of students and psychosocial variables are the most challenging for both international and British participants studying within UK university system. These scales are explained as follows.

5.3.1.1 General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28)

To gain more information about mental health from the respondents, GHQ-28 was used for the main study. It has 28 items and is rated on a 4-point Likert scale. It measures four subscales of anxiety, severe depression, somatic symptoms and social dysfunction and not only scores for anxiety, depression and mental disorders but also negative and positive mental health as well; higher scores reflect better mental health. The 28 items are rated by respondents on a measure of one to four, from 'Not at all' to 'Much more than usual'. The questionnaire was originally developed with 60 items by Goldberg and Williams (1988) but has been refined without losing its validity. It has been widely used and translated into 38 languages (Goldberg, 1986). This questionnaire has been chosen because it is widely used, is validated by different research studies and has been properly tested (Sterling, Hendrikz, & Kenardy, 2011). The reason for excluding the GHQ-12 used in the pilot study and replacing it with GHQ-28 in the main study was that more information was required from respondents.

5.3.1.2 Socio-Cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) (Kennedy Ward &, 1999)

SCAS has 25 items rating according to a 5-point Likert range. This scale measures student adaptation to the host society.

5.3.1.3 Religious Problem-Solving Styles (RPS) (Pargament & Jones, 1988)

RPS has 18 items and according to a 5-point Likert range. It consists of three subscales involving collaborative, self-direction and deferring solutions for solving problems and coping with different situations in life.

5.3.1.4 Brief Cope (Carver, 1997)

Brief Cope has 28 items and 14 subscales comprised of active coping according to a 4-point Likert range. A self-reporting questionnaire is applied that assesses a number of various coping behaviours adopted by individuals and how a person responds in a specific situation.

5.3.1.5 Sojourner Social Support (SSS) (Ong & Ward, 2005)

Sojourner Social Support has 18 items which are rated according to 5-point Likert range. It is related to helpful behaviours that might help people to experience fewer problems staying in another country.

5.3.1.6 Coping Flexibility Scale (CFS) (Kato, 2012)

The CFS measure has ten items which are all rated according to a 4-point Likert range. It is related to coping flexibilities and is especially relevant to the Asian respondents.

5.3.1.7 Cultural Stress Scale (Rosenthal & Russell, 2006)

The Cultural Stress Scale was developed after recognition of the stress factors for students travelling to other countries to study at university. This measures perceptions of difficulties in living far from homeland. Experiences of cultural stress is rated on a 4-point Likert scale (Rosenthal & Russell, 2006).

5.3.1.8 Three Assimilation Indices (Acculturation)

Three Assimilation Indices were created by Cochrane (1993) in a study of Asian-born parents and their young adult children residing in Britain. The indices include the Cultural Assimilation Index, which consists of 11 questions and measures customs and habits; the Identification Assimilation Index, which measures identity and belonging, and consists of 15 questions; and the Structural Assimilation Index, which measures social contacts. The Identification Assimilation Index and Structural Assimilation Index have been excluded because they were not valid for use in the main study, and the items were covered by the research instruments.

It was found that the different generations differed in their attitudes, especially related to preference of ethnically similar spouses. In comparison, there was no difference between students' parents and their children on this variable. I chose this because it is important to understand students' different cultural environments. The main area of focus is on the Cultural Assimilation Index, which measures customs and habits, including food and drink, clothing, and English language. The questionnaire concentrates on factual points of feedback on assimilation, rather than desirable attributes. I have chosen this because of its suitability in measuring customs and habits of people living in new environments (El-Sabawy, 2011).

5.4 Response rates for students

I determined that I needed a response rate of at least 50% and I therefore distributed by hand to 1000 potential participants across 10 universities, in the expectation that I would meet my target sample of 500 (see Table 5.1). The response rate from individual universities ranged from 70% at De Montfort University to 89% at the University of Bedfordshire. Completed

and returned questionnaires were received from 796 respondents; therefore an overall response rate of 80% was achieved. The response rate achieved for the international students ranged from 70 % to 91%. In contrast, the response rate achieved for the British students ranged from 55 % to 82%.

Table 5.1 Response Rate for Questionnaires

Name of University	Students	Number of participants opting out	Number of Incomplete questionnaires	Completed questionnaires			Total of Participants	Response Rate
				Male	Female	Total		
1.University of Bedfordshire	IN	3	10	62	22	84	97	87 %
	BS	2	10	15	20	35	47	75%
2.Cranfield University	IN	2	6	37	18	55	63	81%
	BS	1	8	8	7	15	24	62%
3. Leicester University	IN	2	10	35	8	43	55	78 %
	BS	-	7	20	12	32	39	82%
4. De Montfort University	IN	2	10	34	6	40	52	76%
	BS	1	11	9	6	15	27	55%
5.Coventry University	IN	-	8	30	32	62	70	88%
	BS	2	10	12	16	28	40	70%
6.Middlesex University	IN	8	12	26	20	46	66	70%
	BS	-	4	9	19	28	32	87%
7.University of Hertfordshire	IN	3	2	24	22	46	51	91%
	BS	2	1	12	7	19	22	86%
8.University of Birmingham	IN	5	10	25	42	67	82	81%
	BS	3	9	10	13	23	35	65%
9.BPP University	IN	4	8	29	12	41	53	77%
	BS	2	5	11	11	22	29	75%
10. Swansea University	IN	-	8	29	32	61	69	88%
	BS	3	10	11	23	34	47	72%
Overall 10 university	IN	29	84	323	222	545	658	82%
	BS	16	75	105	146	251	342	73%
Total	Both students	45	159	428	368	796	1000	80%

5.4.1 Ethical Issues

Throughout this research, participants were given the opportunity to voluntarily be part of the study by signing their informed consent form before the beginning of the collection stages.

I ensured that all research participants were made completely aware of their optional choice to take part and that they were also transparently aware that there were no risks during their participation. Competently, each participant was enthusiastically informed of the help and contribution they would make to the study, if they took part. Respectfully, the participants were reminded that their participation was not compulsory and that they had the full right to opt out at any time if they felt any violation to their privacy or need to withdraw, then they could do so. The reason and value of each participant's involvement in the study was also explained, to indicate justified reasons as to why they had been chosen to participate. The participants were given a promise to see the results and main findings of the study when it would be reported.

I asked the participants' permission to answer questions from the questionnaire and to conduct semi-structured interviews. Participants of the study were not deceived in any way about their participation in the study, as the information regarding the study and the way the study would be conducted were fully provided to them with transparency.

As required by the Department of Psychology and the University's ethics committee, I filled in an ethical research approval form before the start of the study and sent it to the University of Bedfordshire for approval. Consequently, I obtained the certificate of ethical research approval. Participants' data were treated confidentially and anonymously. For example, participants' names were replaced by pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality and privacy (Pring, 2000). In addition, the data were stored in a secure place where only I and the thesis supervisors could access it by using password-protected computers. As an extra courtesy, where participants had given information in their interviews that was needed for inclusion in the study in the form of quoted points and views they clearly shared, they were informed that this information was used to support and strengthen the evidence for the research findings.

5.5 Quantitative data analysis

In regards to the analysis of quantitative data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20) was used for this study. To explain the appearances of the population sample size in relative to the demographic data statistics, calculations of descriptive statistics

were carried out to reveal key characteristics of the sample; on the other hand frequency statistics represented percentage distributions, percentiles, means, standard deviations, and medians (Green & Salkind, 2010).

Moreover, the use of statistical analyses and inferential statistical testing were performed by calculating cross-tabulations of predictor variables to develop accurate contingency tables. A p-value less than or equal to 0.05 was deemed statistically significant (Elliott & Woodward, 2007).

A series of Pearson correlations was applied to examine the potential inter-correlations among the variables. Independent t-tests and ANOVA were performed to detect the differences on selected variables to detect differences between groups (gender, nationality etc). Finally, a two by two ANOVA, otherwise known as a multiple regression was used to explore any link between predictive and dependent variables.

The internal consistencies of scales used in this research which was put to the test by calculating Cronbach's Alpha for each one, as shown in Table 5.2; a more detailed analysis for each scale can be found in Appendix 5, consisting of the use of Cronbach's Alpha, if items were deleted and the corrected items-total correlation.

Table 5.2 Cronbach's Alpha for all measures included in the study

	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)	28	.74	.93
Culture Stress (CS)	8	.75	.84
Brief Cope (Cope)	28	.75	.92
Religious Problem Solving (RPS)	18	.75	.90
Sociocultural adaptation scales (SCAS)	18	.77	.96
Coping flexibility (CFS)	10	.75	.87
Sojourner social support (SSS)	18	.77	.96
Cultural assimilation index (CAI)	11	.75	.87

The reason for using Cronbach's Alpha is for estimating the reliability of all scales used in the current study. According to Kline (1999), a Cronbach's Alpha of .69 or below is unacceptable, between .70 and .79 is good, between .80 and .89 is very good and above .90 is

excellent. In this study, all instruments used showed an acceptable internal consistency, except for the Cultural assimilation index (CAI) which had a Cronbach's Alpha value below the acceptable threshold (.64). In this case, deleting item number four would raise the Cronbach's alpha score for this study to $\alpha = .75$, hence the deletion should be considered. However, all other items in the questionnaire CAI should be retained.

5.5.1 Validity and Reliability

It is important that any pre-existing questionnaires that are used in the research are tested for validity before being applied to the target population (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Each study is different and such questionnaires may not be relevant or appropriate. Although this study used eight pre-existing questionnaires for the scales, I needed to confirm the validity and reliability with reference to my research. All data were subjected to a validity test to confirm the validity of all instruments when they were merged together into one large questionnaire. The most common elements used in questionnaire validation are Face Validity and Construct Validity. Face validity checks that the measure is assessing the construct under investigation and construct validity ensures that the measure is measuring what it is intending to measure. Two measures of setting up a test that identifies validity of sources and reliability of where the sources originate regarding the link they share with factor analysis.

In addition, I carried out a reliability test for the merged questionnaire used to carry out critical investigations of the significant link between the dependent variables known as mental health (outcome variable) and independent variables. The credibility of useful sources denotes the ability of a research instrument to produce consistency and meet objectives with key findings (Denscombe, 2003). Reliability can be categorized into two types: internal and external; both internal and external assess the reliability of the parameters of which the scale varies from one use to another (Brymen, 2012; Beck, Steer, & Brown 1996). I tested the internal reliability of the questionnaires to ensure the questions were reliable for both groups of students who participated in this study. It is important that there is internal consistency reliability and this can be tested by using the Cronbach's Alpha test, with 0.70 accepted as a sign of scale reliability (Institute for Digital Research and Education, 2016). Importantly, reports reveal themselves as being diverse about satisfactory values, indicating 0.70 to 0.95 in Alpha (Worthington, 2003).

Consistency of the questions are found to determine their value, as it was earlier suggested that a low value of alpha was predicted, although when viewing the validity and reliability figures above (see Table 5-2) it is very clear to confirm that all show a high validity rate.

The scales produced the following alpha values: General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) = .93; Culture Stress (CS) = .84; Brief Cope (Cope) = .92; Religious Problem Solving (RPS) = .90; Sociocultural Adaptation Scales (SCAS) = .96; Coping Flexibility (CFS) = .87; Sojourner Social Support (SSS) = .96; and Cultural Assimilation Index (CAI) = .87. These scales fell within the acceptable range, apart from the Cultural Assimilation Index, which fell just short of what was regarded as acceptable.

5.5.2 Demographic information

The total sample was comprised of 796 students, 545 being international students and 251 British students. This section summarises the descriptive statistics for 1) demographic information, 2) ethnic and religious information, and 3) socio-economic information for international and British students separately.

Descriptive statistics for demographic information for International and British students are presented in Table 5.3. The majority of international students were postgraduate students and between 25 and 34 years old. However, it shows that there is still a significant 10.6% over the age of 35, who are studying in UK universities. The number of male international students participated in this study were slightly more than their female counterparts. The proportion of British postgraduates and undergraduates students is more evenly split. The most frequent age group is 18 to 24 years and there are more females than males participants.

Table 5.3 Demographic variables for international and British students

	International students (N=545, 68.5%)		British students (N=251, 31.5%)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Education				
Postgraduate	414	76	144	57.4
Undergraduate	131	24	107	42.6
Age				
18-24	129	23.7	124	49.4
25-34	340	62.4	88	35.1
>= 35	76	13.9	39	15.5

Gender				
Male	323	59.3	105	41.8
Female	222	40.7	146	58.2

5.5.3 Personal Demographics

Information about demographics relating to ethnicity, religion, marital status and family for international and British students is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Personal demographics for international and British students

	International students (N=545, 68.5%)		British students (N=251, 31.5%)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity				
White British	-	-	113	45.0
Other white background	36	6.6	49	19.5
Indian subcontinents	39	7.2	26	10.4
African	87	16.0	21	8.4
Far East	69	12.7	8	3.2
Middle East	271	49.7	9	3.6
Other	43	7.9	25	10.0
Belief in God				
Yes	469	86.1	148	59
No	76	13.9	103	41
Religion				
Christian	117	21.5	127	50.6
Islam	339	62.2	3	17.1
Hindu	12	2.2	14	5.6
Sikh	3	0.6	0	0
Other	74	13.6	67	26.7
Length of stay				
Less than 2 years	389	71.4	0	0
From 2 up to 6 years	156	28.6	0	0
>7 years	-	-	251	100
Marital status				

Single	281	51.6	165	65.7
Married/cohabiting	257	47.2	60	23.9
Married but separated	7	1.3	24	9.6
Divorced	0	0	2	0.8
Having children				
Yes	213	39.1	64	25.5
No	332	60.9	187	74.5

Although both international and British student groups have students from different ethnicities, nearly half of the international students are from the Middle East, whilst 45% of British students come from a white British background. The vast majority of international students reported that they believe in God against 59% in the British students group. Most of the international students are Muslim. Christianity is the second most common religion. All British students have been in the UK for more than 7 years. The majority of international students have been in the UK for less than 2 years. Overseas students specifically show in the results a subtle difference to take note of, which was more than half of the student which were single with 47% being married. Most students, both British and international, do not have children.

5.5.4 Socio-demographic information

Information about monthly income, funding and house tenure for international and British students is shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Socio-economic information for international and British students

	International students (N=545, 68.5%)		British students (N=251, 31.5%)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Income per month (£)				
400-999	230	42.2	155	61.8
1000-1999	161	29.5	71	28.3
>2000	154	28.3	25	10.0
Funding				
Self-funding	179	32.8	152	60.6
Scholarship	305	56.0	33	13.1
Other	11.2	11.2	66	26.3
Housing tenure				

Council tenant	30	5.5	45	17.9
Private tenant	281	51.6	55	21.9
Owner	31	5.7	37	14.7
Students accommodation	86	15.8	54	21.5
Sharing house	58	10.6	41	16.3
Host family	19	3.5	14	5.6
Other	40	7.3	5	2.0

Most British and international students reported a monthly income between £400 and £999. Whilst 60% of British students are self-funded, 56% of international students have a scholarship to support their studies. Private tenancy is more common amongst international students. For British students however, there was no obvious preferred tenancy type, although the most common ones were private tenancy and student accommodation. It shows that international students have more scholarships than British students; However, British students have a higher percentage of self-funding as well as other, for example funding from parents or student loans, than international students.

5.5.4.1 Descriptive assimilation index

The total number of international students was 545, including males 323 and 222 females. The age range was from 18 up to over 35. The Cultural Assimilation index (CAI) has 11 different questions focusing on habits and food while living abroad. The majority of students (62%) stated they ate mixed food as usual; this may be because they were living alone and could choose what they wanted to eat, or they may have wanted to be involved with this culture to meet people and have a chance to interact with the new environment. On the other hand, 17 students (3.1%) preferred to eat English food; the reason behind this may be that they were living with a host family (English family) or simply that they liked British food. Also, the result found that 189 international students (34.4%) preferred to eat their own cultural food, which may predispose them to being unable to interact with the new environment by not wanting try what they consider to be foreign food. Only 10 students (1.8%) never ate outside their home, which may be because they are living with their own family and they have family commitments. Nevertheless, 74.2% occasionally ate outside their home and 114 international students (20%) regularly ate outside the home, showing that they may be interested in trying out new things and in interacting with the new environment. The

highest percentage (51.6%) of students stated they may do not eat forbidden or “haram” foods and 32% said they avoided some foods because of religious reasons.

It was found that 39.8% of both genders preferred to dress in traditional clothing, especially during their own traditional festivals, which meant that they could transfer to their own culture to reduce stress. Also, 33.6% of students stated they liked to dress in their own traditional clothing outside the home from time to time, perhaps because they felt comfortable wearing it. On the other hand, 145 international students (26.6%) preferred to wear their traditional clothes inside the house, which could mean that they feel more comfortable where they live, without being involved with the new culture, perhaps to show their tendency to keep their own culture while trying to interact/integrate with the new culture outside home.

A large percentage (57.8%) did not drink alcohol outside their homes, or inside their homes, perhaps because of religious reasons but also for health reasons. The largest number of students (437 or 80.2%) believed they spoke good English, especially when they were speaking with neighbours or on social conversations, which may be an indication of them having lived more than two years in the UK, and understanding how to interact with people and deal with the new culture. However, only 3.1% of the international students thought they spoke very good English, and 2.6% estimated they could speak English fluently, perhaps such confidence coming because they interacted more with British students than their counterparts. The results show that 47.9% of students speak their own language at home, perhaps because they are living with their family or with friends of the same nationality, and they were happy to speak their own language as it was more natural to do so. On the other hand, the results found that 38.9% used both languages equally, which suggests they are interacting with the new environment as well as understanding the new culture. Most of the participants rated their reading English reading skills as good, as shown in the result with 315 international students (57.8%) confirming this. However, 138 international students (25.3 %) faced difficulties but said they could cope; perhaps they were still relative newcomers to the UK culture. The result indicates that 70.5% of students sometimes read the newspaper, which means that maybe they wanted to improve their English language, as well as understand the new environment through the media. On the other hand, the result found that 26.7% (142) of international students watched non-selective TV programmes, perhaps because they were unwilling to interact with people, even when they have free time. Only 7% watched selected TV programmes and a few international students did not understand some programmes,

maybe because they did not know the field, or the programmes used advanced language. For further details see Appendix 10.

5.5.5 Interaction effect between student groups and demographic variables

The following section is comprised of a set of 2x2 ANOVAs (this was the international group and the resident group men and women) and was performed with group and gender between subject variables of: religious problem solving, culture stress, mental health, social-cultural adaptation, brief cope, social support, coping flexibility and culture assimilation. The reasons for testing variables like gender, having children and living with family were related to the hypotheses for this study, which are detailed under each respective section.

Regarding the relevance of these variables, in statistical hypothesis testing, there are two types of errors that can occur, Type I and Type II errors, according to Keppel and Wickens (2004):

- Type I error is the incorrect rejection of a true null hypothesis. Once this error has occurred the alpha symbol, α , will appear to denote an error. Furthermore, out of all twenty-one hypotheses of this study, some do represent examples of Type I error, as this approach is beneficial to apply in the study because it strongly identifies the differences between a positive null and a negative null, and therefore is justifiable to ensure that each hypothesis is kept on a logical level of understanding (Keppel & Wickens, 2004).
- Type II error on the other hand is the failure to reject a false null hypothesis. The probability of a Type II error is denoted by the beta symbol β and reveals a significant negative null (Keppel & Wickens, 2004).

5.5.6 Gender

There had not been any testing of a potential association with gender in Study I, because of limited time in Study I and the intention to investigate this aspect in Study II; yet previous literature has indicated that gender is an important factor in adaptability and acculturation. More detail was needed on gender in Study II and raised the following hypotheses:

H1. International male and female students studying in UK universities have suffered more mental health problems than their British counterparts.

H2. International male and female students are more liable to seek help than British male and female students.

H3. International male and female students have lower coping strategies compared to their counterparts (British male and female students).

H4. International male and female students are likely to use religious aspects more to solve problems they were faced, in comparison to their counterparts (British male and female students).

H5. International male and female students face difficulties in adapting to life in the UK compared to their British male and female counterparts.

H6. International male and female students have a tendency to use coping flexibility more during their time in the UK, in contrast to British male and female students.

5.5.6.1 General mental health

Table 5.7 depicts the ANOVA results for mental health and was used to test the first hypothesis relating to an association between gender and mental health. There was a main effect for the student group, indicating that British students scored higher in mental health compared to international students. There was also a main effect of gender, where males show a higher level of mental health than females. There was not, however, a significant interaction effect between student group and gender ($F_{1, 792} = .789, p = .375$).

Table 5.6 Two-way ANOVA (gender and student group as between-group variables) on General Mental Health

Scale		Mean	SD	F	p
GHQ	IS & Males	63.51	5.69		
	IS & Females	62.72	5.29		
	BS & Males	68.83	15.83		
	BS & Females	66.73	14.19		
	IS total	63.20	5.55		
	BS total	67.62	14.91		
	Males total	64.82	9.53		
	Females total	64.32	10.02		
	Student group			50.99	.000
	Gender			3.82	.050
	Gender x Student group			.789	.375

Note: IS= International students, BS= British Students, GHQ = General Health Questionnaire.

The results indicate that the first hypothesis is rejected in the sense that there is no significant interaction effect in mental health between international students and British students and gender.

5.5.6.2 Social Support

The results of ANOVA for the gender and group differences on sojourner social support are shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.7 Two-way ANOVA (gender and student group against Sojourner Social Support (SSS))

Scale		Mean	SD	F	P
SSS	IS & Males	49.17	13.26		
	IS & Females	48.64	13.72		
	BS & Males	58.15	16.00		
	BS & Females	50.34	17.28		
	IS total	48.96	13.44		
	BS total	59.42	16.76		
	Males total	51.38	14.49		
	Females total	53.28	16.25		
	Student group		.	83.90	.000
	Gender			0.54	.464
	Gender x Student group			1.45	.228

Note: IS= International students, BS= British Students and SSS=Sojourner Social Support.

British students showed higher scores in social support compared to international students, regardless of gender. However, neither the main effect of gender nor the interaction term were significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the second hypothesis is rejected based on the research results, particularly when both sets of results (international and British students) are combined. There is a non-significant difference between genders ($F 2.792 = 1.45$, $p = .228$).

5.5.6.3 Coping Strategies

There were no significant main effects for gender and student group ($F 2.792 = 1.15$, $p = .283$). However, the interaction between the two was significant, as seen in Figure 5.9. Regardless of the results failing to show a link between coping strategies and each student

group individually, it proves an association when both student groups are combined ($F 1.792 = 42.56, p = .001$).

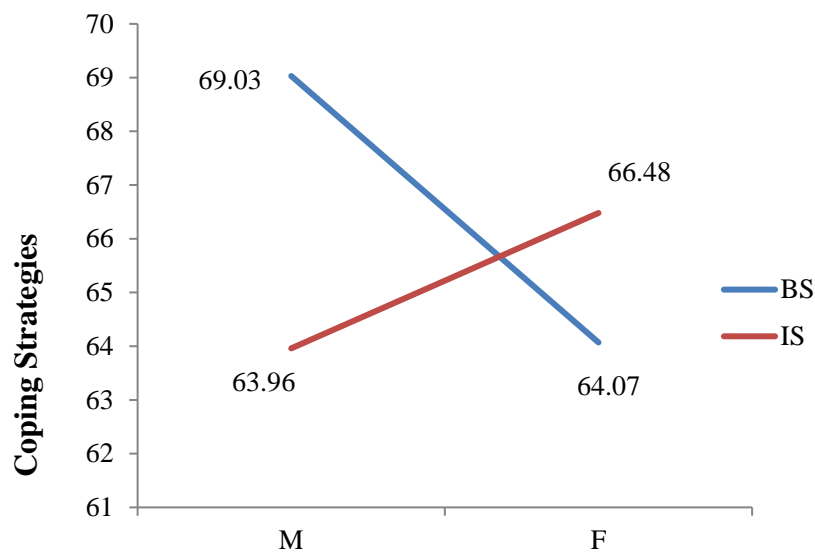


Figure 5.1 Interaction effect between gender and student group against Coping Strategies

It can be inferred that the third hypothesis is rejected, as there is a non-significant result for the main effect. However, British male students reported higher levels of coping strategy than British females, whereas the opposite happens for international students, where females are the ones that showed higher levels of coping strategy, compared to males.

5.5.6.4 Religion Problem Solving

Main effects for gender and student group were non-significant. However, there was profound interaction between student participants regarding gender ($F 1.792 = 12.94, p = .001$) (Figure 5.10). In terms of the fourth hypothesis, the findings of this study reveal that there is a difference between using religion to solve their problems for each group individually and for both groups when results are integrated. It can be shown that the fourth hypothesis is accepted in that international students of both female and male participants use religious problem solving, and that there is a differential in gender.

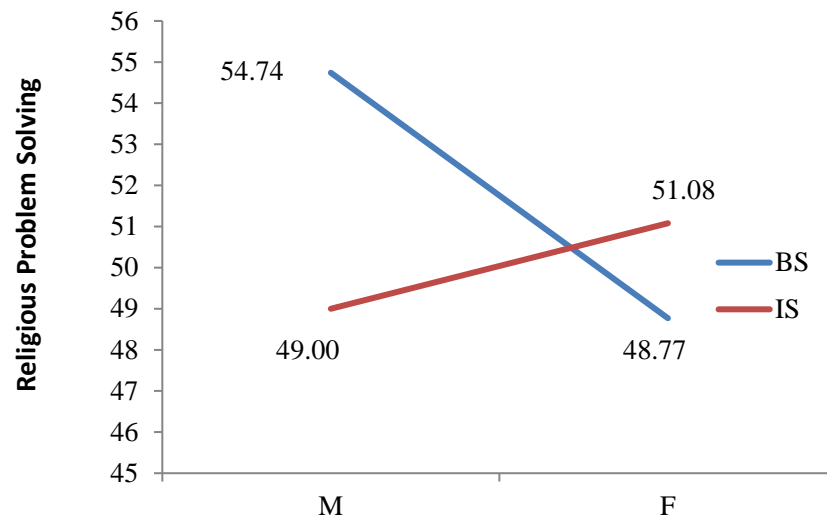


Figure 5.2 Interaction effect between gender and student group on Religious Problem Solving (RPS)

Male British students showed higher scores of religious problem solving than female British students. However, female international students reported higher scores than male international students.

5.5.6.5 Social Cultural Adaptation

British students scored significantly higher compared to overseas students. Found that there was not, however, a significant major effect for gender. There was a significant interaction between group participants and gender ($F_{792} = 28, p = .005$) (Figure 5.11). Therefore, despite the fact that there is a difference between each student group individually, the results of this study show that there is an association between both genders in both participant groups and social cultural adaptation, hence we can conclude that the fifth hypothesis is accepted; that international students of both genders have difficulties in adapting to living in the UK.

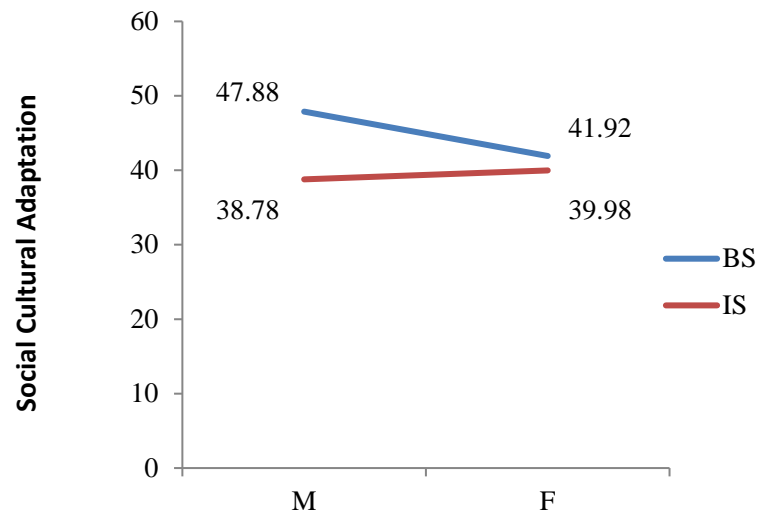


Figure 5.3 Interaction effect between gender and student group against Social-Cultural Adaptation scale SCAS

Female British and international students reported comparable results in social cultural adaptation. However, male British students showed a higher score compared to male international students.

5.5.6.6 Coping Flexibility

There is a main effect for the student group, where British students showed higher coping flexibility than overseas students. However, the main effect for gender was not significant. Interestingly, it was significant to see an interaction effect between group participants and gender ($F_{1, 792} = 10.74, p = .005$). According to Figure 5.12, the pattern of CFS scores between males and females is different for each student group. Whilst, British male students had higher scores than female students, international male students scored lower than international female students. Therefore, the result of this study shows that there is a difference between both genders in both participant groups and coping flexibility, hence it can be inferred that the sixth hypothesis is accepted and that international students use coping flexibility more than British students.

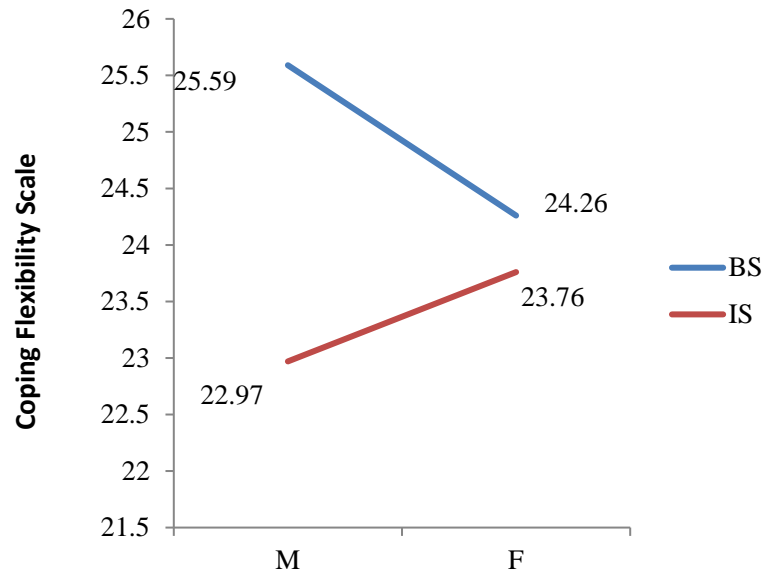


Figure 5.4 Interaction effect between gender and student group against Coping Flexibility Scale CFS

5.5.7 Having Children

The hypotheses related to having children were as follows:

H7. British students, whether they have or do not have children, have better mental health compared to international students, who have and do not have children.

H8. International students, whether they have or do not have children, are more inclined to seek help compared to their counterparts (British students who have or who do not have children).

H9. British students, whether they have or do not have children, have better coping styles compared to international students, who have and who do not have children.

H10. International students, with or without children, are more likely to use their religion to assist them to solve problems, in contrast to their counterparts (British students).

H11. British students, whether they have or do not have children, are more able to adapt to the environment they live in, compared to international students, who have or do not have children.

H12. International students, whether they have or do not have children, are inclined to use coping flexibility more than British students, who have or do not have children.

5.5.7.1 General Mental Health

The interaction effect between student group and having children was statistically significant ($F_{1, 792} = 75.91, p = .001$). As illustrated in Figure 5.13, whilst international students have similar GHQ levels regardless of whether they have children or not, British students who have children score higher than those who do not. Consequently, despite the fact that there is an absence of association between general mental health and each student group individually, the results of this study show that there is a difference between both participant groups having children and general mental health. Hence we can conclude that the seventh hypothesis is accepted, in that international students with children have better mental health than British students.

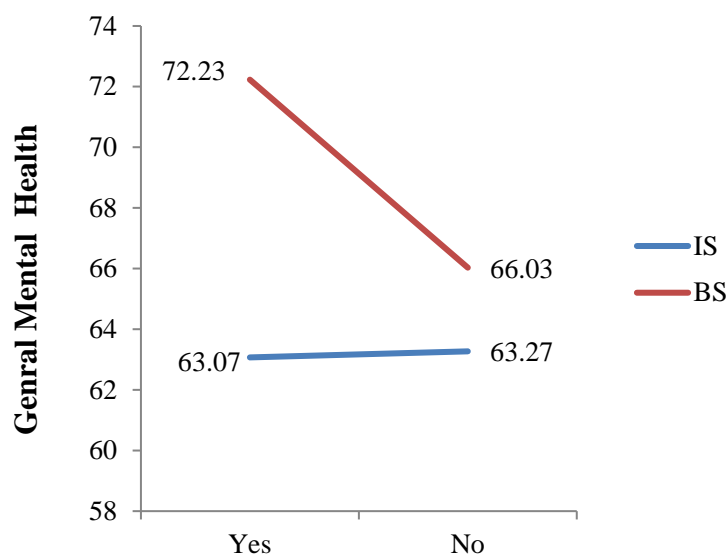


Figure 5.5 Interaction effect between having children and student group on General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)

5.5.7.2 Social Support

Regarding social support it was clear to see a main effect for the participant group, in which British students showed increased levels of social support compared to international students. There was no main effect for having children. The interaction effect between student group and having children however was statistically significant ($F_{1, 792} = 18.96, p = .001$). As shown in Figure 5.7, British students who have children and those who do not reported comparable Sojourner social support (SSS) results. However, international students who have children showed lower scores than those who do not. Therefore, it can be concluded that the

eighth hypothesis is accepted based on the research results which find an association between social support and both international and British students having children.

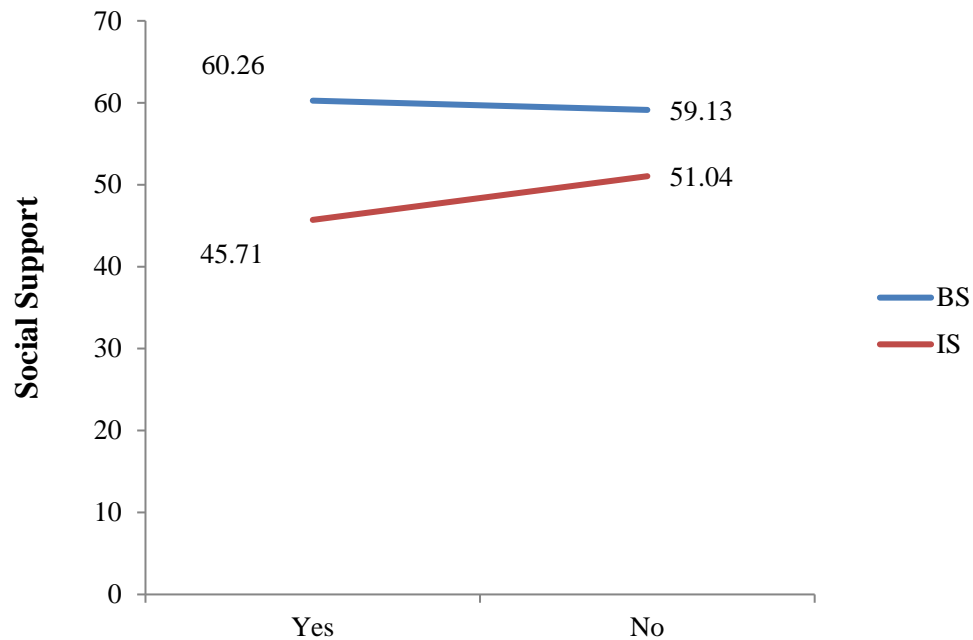


Figure 5.6 Interaction effect between Having children and student group against Sojourner Social Support SSS

5.5.7.3 Coping Strategies

British students reported increased scores on coping strategies compared to international students. Students who are parents also showed significantly higher coping strategies than those who are not.

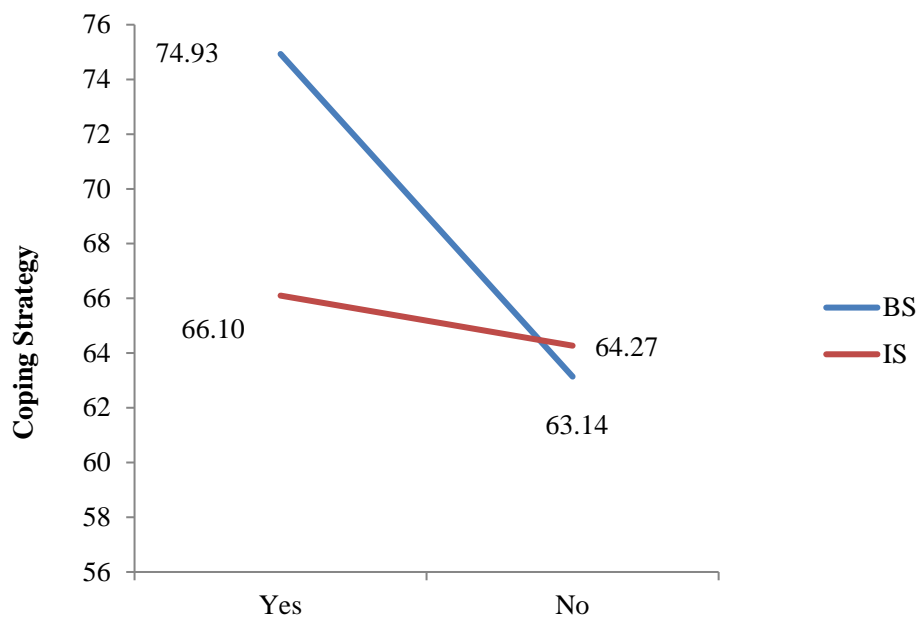


Figure 5.7 Interaction effect between having children and student group against Coping Strategy

The interaction effect between student group and having children was also statistically significant ($F_{1,79} = 235.62, p = .001$). As seen in Figure 5.15, both British and international students who have children reported higher scores than students who do not. However, this difference is more pronounced for British students. It can be concluded that the outcome shows an association between coping strategies for both international and British students with children. Overall, it can be inferred that the ninth hypothesis is accepted and that British students with children have better coping styles than international students.

5.5.7.4 Religious Problem Solving

British students showed higher religious problem solving skills compared to international students. Students who have children also showed higher than those who do not. There was also a significant interaction between having children and student groups ($F_{1,79} = 5.53, p = .001$). According to Figure 5.16, British students who do not have children and international students who have and do not have children showed comparable scores. However, British students who are parents scored higher than any of the other groups. In terms of the tenth hypothesis, the findings of this study reveal that there are differences between using religion to solve their problems for each group individually and for both groups when integrated, therefore it cannot be concluded that the tenth hypothesis is accepted.

as the results do not show that international students with children use religion to solve problems more than British students.

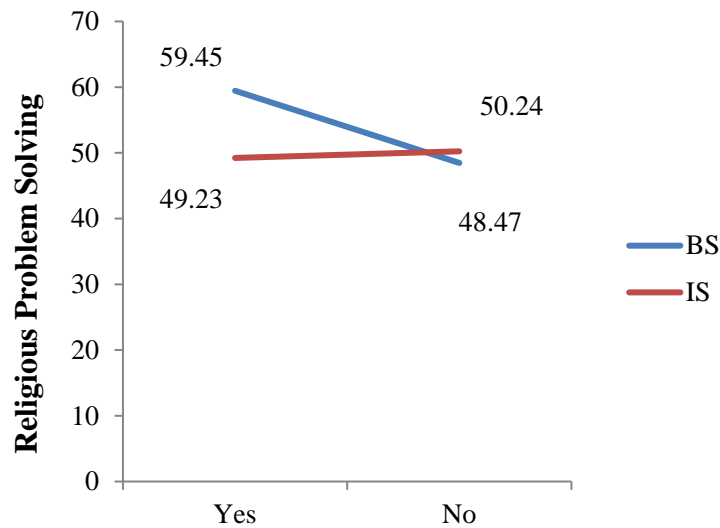


Figure 5.8 Interaction effect between having children and student group against religious problem solving RPS

5.5.7.5 Social Cultural Adaptation

British students showed higher social cultural adaptation scores compared to international students. Students who have children also showed higher adaptation than those without children. There was also a significant interaction ($F_{1, 792} = 34.24, p = .001$) between having children and student group (Figure 5.17).

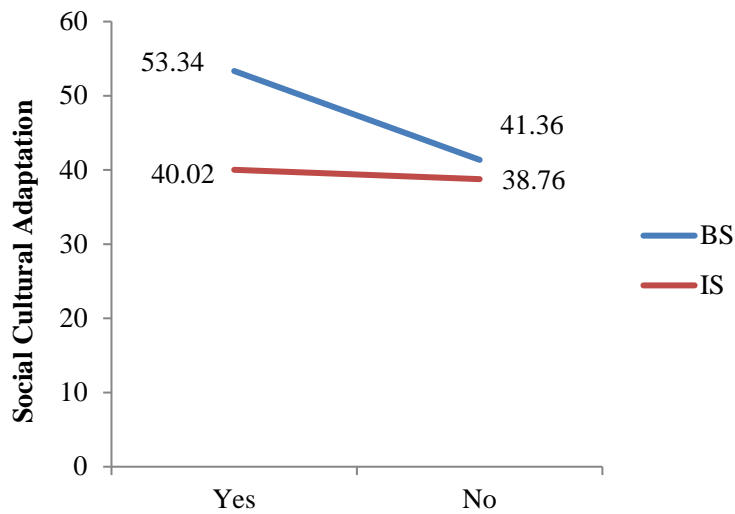


Figure 5.9 Interaction effect between having children and student group against social-cultural adaptation scales SCAS

As seen in Figure 5.17, both British and international students who are parents reported higher scores than students who are not parents. However, this difference is more pronounced for British students. Nevertheless, the results of this study show that there is association between both individual groups (both international and British students whether having children or not) and social cultural adaptation; hence it can be concluded that the eleventh hypothesis is accepted, that British students with children are better adapted to living in their new environment.

5.5.7.6 Coping Flexibility

British students reported better coping flexibility than international students. Students who were parents were also more flexible than students who do not have children. Finally, a significant interaction between having children and student group was also found ($F 1.792 = 9.58, p = .001$). As depicted in Figure 5.18, British students who do not have children and international students with or without children reported similar mean scores. However, British students who are parents scored higher compared to all the other groups. The results of this research show that there is an association between both participant groups and coping flexibility, and it can be inferred that the twelfth hypothesis is supported, and international students with children use coping flexibility more than British students.

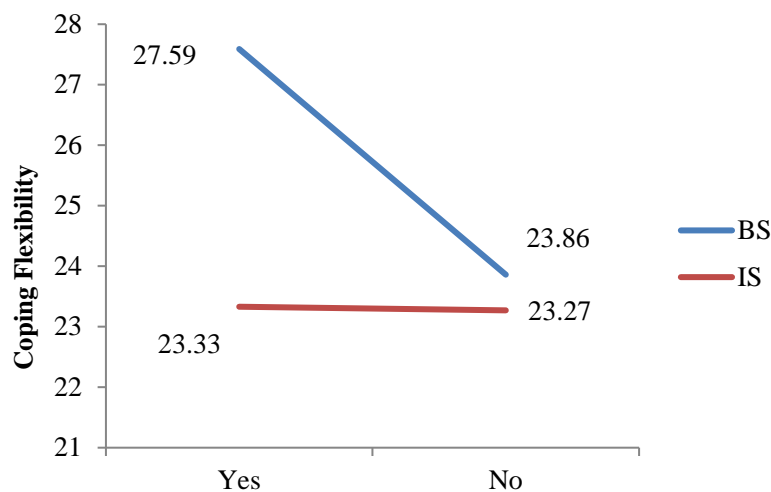


Figure 5.10 Interaction effect between having children and student group against Coping Flexibility Scale (CFS)

5.5.8 Living with family

The hypotheses related to living with family are as follows:

H13. International students, whether they live or do not live with their families, are inclined to use coping flexibility more than British students, who live or do not live with their families.

H14. International students, whether they live or do not live with their families, seek assistance more than British students, who live or do not live with their families.

H15. International students, whether they live or do not live with their families, have a tendency to use coping strategies more than British students, who live or do not live with their families.

H16. International students, whether they live or do not live with their families, are inclined to use religion to solve problems more than British students, who live or do not live with their families.

H17. British students, whether they live or do not live with their families, adapt better to living in their environment than both groups of international students, who live with or do not live with their families.

H18 International students, whether they live or do not live with their families, are likely to use coping flexibility more than British students, who live or do not live with their families.

5.5.8.1 General Mental Health

There was not a significant interaction between living with family and student group against general health (GHQ) or .a main effect of living with family ($F_{2, 792} = 2.64, p = .105$). There was however a main effect of student group, in which British students scored significantly higher than international students (Table 5.19). The result of this study found that there was not an association between general mental health and either international or British students living with their families. Accordingly, the thirteenth hypothesis is not accepted.

Table 5.8 Two-way ANOVA interaction between living with family for both international and British student groups according to Mental Health

Scale		Mean	SD	F	P
GHQ	IS & Living with family	63.01	3.77		
	IS & Not living with family	63.36	6.76		
	BS & Living with family	68.75	15.40		
	BS & Not living with family	66.73	14.50		
	IS total	63.19	5.54		
	BS total	67.61	14.91		
	Living with family total	64.72	9.33		
	Not living with family total	64.47	10.11		
	Student group			38.75	.000
	Living with family			1.31	.245
	Living with family x Student group			2.64	.105

Note: IS= International students, BS= British Students and GHQ=General Health Questionnaire.

5.5.8.2 Social Support

British students reported having more Social Support than international students.

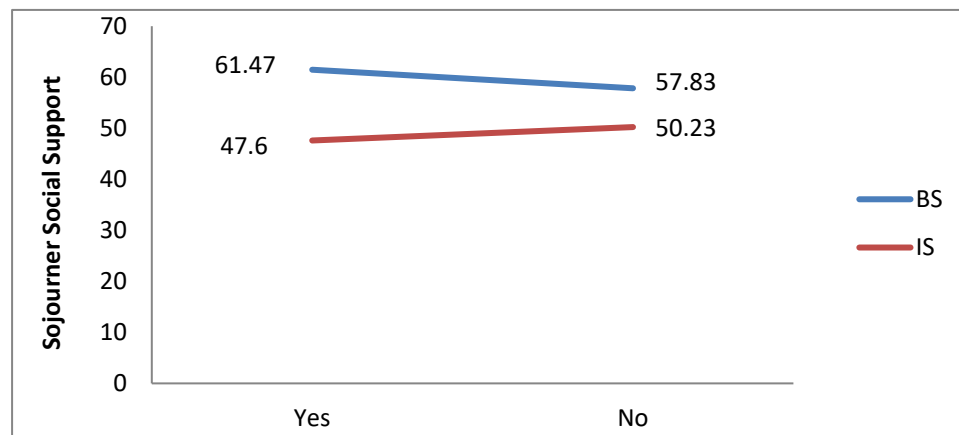


Figure 5.11 Interaction effect between living with family and student group against Sojourner Social Support SSS

The main effect of living with families was not statistically significant. However, the interaction between living with family and student group was significant ($F_{1, 792} = 15.09, p = .005$). As shown in Figure 5.20, British students living with family showed higher scores than those who do not. Conversely, international students living with family showed lower scores than those who do not. The finding of this study established that there is an association between seeking social supports and both international and British students living with their families. Accordingly, the fourteenth hypothesis is not accepted as it could not be shown that international students living with families needed more social support than British students.

5.5.8.3 Coping Strategies

There were no main effects for either student group or living with family. However, the interaction between the two was significant ($F_{1, 792} = 40.86, p = .005$). Figure 5.21 shows a different pattern of coping strategies scores for the two student groups. The mean score for international students who live with their families slightly decreases compared to those who do not. British students who live with their family report higher scores than those who do not. It can be concluded that the result shows an association between coping strategies and both international and British students living with families. Overall, it can be inferred that the

fifteenth hypothesis is accepted and that international students living with their families use more coping strategies than British students.

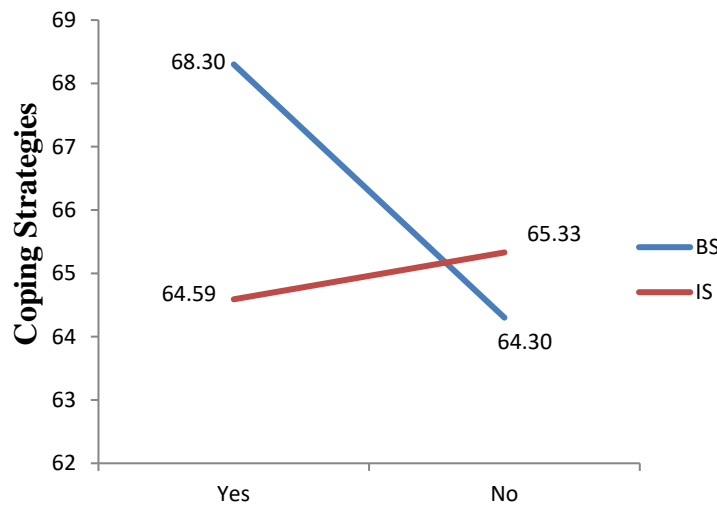


Figure 5.12 Interaction effect between living with family and student group against Coping Strategy

5.5.8.4 Religious Problem Solving

There was no main effect for the student group. However, students who live with their families admitted relying more on religion for problem solving than those who do not live with their family. It is also interesting to point out a key significance of interaction between living with family and student group ($F_{1,792} = 7.52, p = .004$). As shown in Figure 5.22, although the mean score for RPS increases from students who live with their family, compared to those who do not, for both international and British students, this increase is larger in the latter group. According to this test, the findings of this study reveals that there is an association between using religion to solve their problems for each group individually and for international and British students whether living with their families or not. Therefore, the sixteenth hypothesis is rejected because the results do not support it.

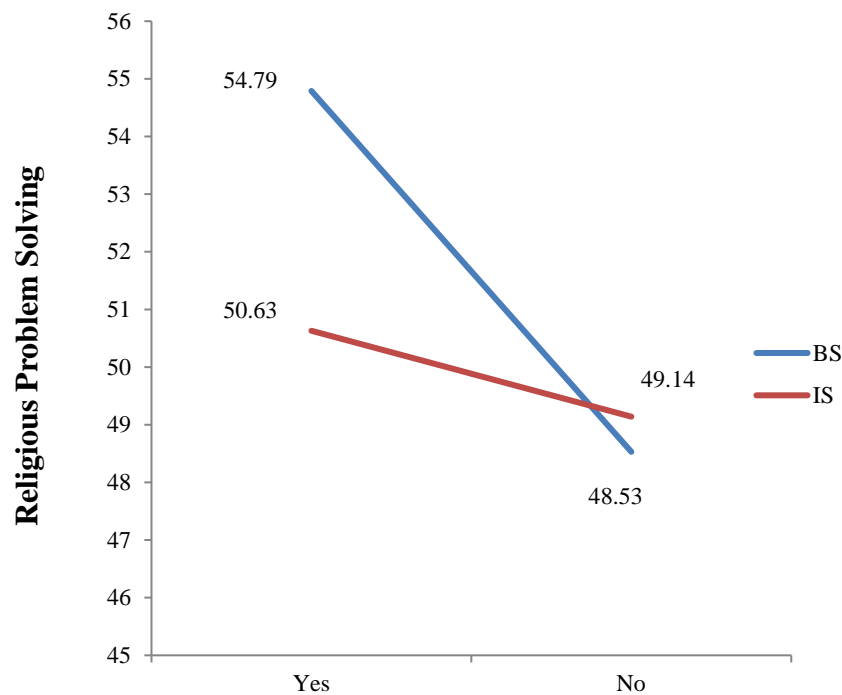


Figure 5.13 Interaction effect between living with family and student group against Religious Problem Solving (RPS)

5.5.8.5 Social Cultural Adaptation

Table 5.23 summarises the results for the factorial ANOVA. No clear sign of substantial interaction was found between living with family and student group against social-cultural adaptation (SCAS) adaptation ($F_{2, 792} = 2.04, p = .153$). The main effect for living with family was also statistically significant. Students living with their family reported significantly increased scores compared to those who do not. Nevertheless, the results of this study show that there is not any association between individual groups (both international and British students) and social cultural adaptation; hence we can conclude that the seventeenth hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5.9 Two-way ANOVA for the interaction between living with family and student group against SCAS

Scale		Mean	SD	F	P
SCAS	IS & Living with family	39.96	12.09		

	IS & Not living with family	38.61	14.83		
	BS & Living with family	47.19	21.85		
	BS & Not living with family	42.25	20.45		
	IS total	39.26	13.60		
	BS total	44.41	21.17		
	Living with family total	42.12	15.96		
	Not living with family total	39.81	16.95		
	Student group			18.79	.000
	Living with family			6.29	.012
	Living with family x Student group			2.04	.153

Note: IS= International students, BS= British Students and SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale.

5.5.8.6 Coping Flexibility

There was not a significant interaction between living with family and student group against coping flexibility (CFS) ($F_{2,792} = 5.66, p = .066$). There was also no main effect for the factor living with family. The result for the student group however was statistically significant, where British students scored significantly higher than international students (Table 5.24). Therefore, the results of this research show that there is no association between either participant group, international or British students living with families and coping flexibility; hence it can be inferred that the eighteenth hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5.10 Two-way ANOVA for the interaction between living with family and student group against CFS

Scale		Mean	SD	F	<i>p</i>
CFS	IS & Living with family	23.22	4.86		
	IS & Not living with family	23.36	5.01		

	BS & Living with family	25.61	7.22		
	BS & Not living with family	24.19	6.26		
	IS total	23.29	4.93		
	BS total	24.81	6.72		
	Living with family total	23.93	5.76		
	Not living with family total	23.63	5.46		
	Student group			14.25	.000
	Living with family			2.26	.133
	Living with family x Student group			3.39	.066

Note: IS= International students, BS= British Students and CFS= Coping Flexibility Scale.

5.5.9 Factors predicting General Mental Health

This section aims to explore the role of Social Support (SSS), Coping Strategies (Cope), Religious Problem Solving (RPS), Social-Cultural Adaptation (SCAS) and Coping Flexibility (CFS) in predicting mental health status. Two multiple hierarchical regression analyses were carried out separately for each student group. For British students age and gender were introduced in the first model to control for basic demographic variables that are known to affect mental health; SSS, Cope, RPS, SCAS and CFS were all introduced in the second model. For international students the same regression was carried out as for British students, but with an additional second model to also include the predictive power of the two international students' specific measures: CS and CAI. This way, the results from the first regression and the first model from the second regression can be compared. Before each regression analysis, a correlation matrix between plural and mental health is also presented. The hypotheses relating to this section are:

H19:

H0 There is no significant association between the five following independent variables (coping strategy, coping flexibility, religious, social support and adaptation) with mental health as the dependent variable for British students and international students.

H1 There is a significant association between the five following independent variables (coping strategy, coping flexibility, religious problem solving, social support and adaptation) with mental health as the dependent variable for British students and international students.

H20:

H0 There is no significant association between the seven following independent variables (coping strategy, coping flexibility, religious problem solving, social support and adaptation, culture stress and acculturation) with mental health as the dependent variable for international students only.

H1 There is a significant association between the seven following independent variables (coping strategy, coping flexibility, religious problem solving, social support and adaptation, culture stress and acculturation) with mental health as the dependent variable for international students only.

H21:

H0 There is no significant association between mental health and Culture Stress and Culture Assimilation Index influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support for international students only.

H1 There is a significant association between mental health and Culture Stress and Culture Assimilation Index influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support for international students only.

H22:

H0 There is no significant association between mental health and Coping Strategies, and Religious influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support for international and British students.

H1 There is a significant association between mental health and Coping Strategies, and Religious ion Problem Solving influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support for international and British students.

5.5.9.1 British and International Students

Table 5.25 depicts the correlation between mental health in both students groups and the five predictor variables (SSS, Cope, RPS, SCAS and CFS), which were tested in correlation with mental health. The table also demonstrates that there was a visible correlation found between outcomes from the key variables 'mental health' and the five predictor variables; in addition,

it shows the highest correlation between mental health and the SCAS which was ($r = .70$, $p < .05$), while the lowest correlation was ($r = .48$, $p < .05$).

Table 5.11 Correlation matrix between GHQ, SSS, Cope, RPS, SCAS and CFS for International and British students

	SSS	Cope	RPS	SCAS	CFS
GHQ	.49***	.63***	.61***	.70***	.61***
SSS	-	.43***	.39***	.29***	.28***
Cope		-	.78***	.75***	.67***
RPS			-	.71***	.66***
SCAS				-	.73***

Note: *** $p < .001$ RPS=Religious problem Solving; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS= Coping Flexibility Scale;

Table 5.26 summarises the results for the multiple regression after adjusting the moderating factors, such as gender and age for both groups of British and international students. The first regression model was statistically significant but explained very little (6%) of the variance of GHQ scores. The second model however, explained 60% of the variance overall, from which SSS, Cope, RPS, SCAS and CFS accounted for 55%. The predictor with the highest impact on GHQ was SCAS, followed by SSS and CFS.

Table 5.12 Multiple Regression for International and British Students

	Unstand Beta	SE Unstand Beta	Stand. Beta	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
Age	.03	.90	.00	.03	.976
Gender	.10	1.52	.00	.08	.940
SSS	.26	.04	.29	6.33	.000
Cope	.00	.06	.00	-0.03	.973
RPS	.07	.06	.08	1.08	.283
SCAS	.33	.05	.46	6.55	.000
CFS	.33	.14	.15	2.34	.020

RPS=Religious problem Solving; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS= Coping Flexibility Scale.

Model 1: $R^2 = .06$, $F(2, 248) = 7.43$, $p < .01$. Model 2: $R^2 = .78$, $F(7, 243) = 52.73$, $p < .001$.

It was found that there was a significant association between three out of five predictor variables (Coping Flexibility, Social Support and Adaptation) with Mental Health. Therefore,

the nineteenth hypothesis is supported regarding these three variables. However, results failed to find an association between the two main independent variables (coping strategy and religious problem solving) and mental health. Therefore, the nineteenth hypothesis was rejected.

5.5.9.2 International Students

Table 5.27 shows the correlations between the predictors and outcome, and the correlations between all predictors. Overall, the correlations between predictors and the outcome were all weak. The strongest correlations, between GHQ and Cope, and between GHQ and RPS, were statistically significant but weak. The strongest correlation amongst the predictors was also weak in general, with the exception of the correlation between SCAS and CFS.

Table 5.13 Correlation matrix between GHQ, SSS, Cope, RPS, SCAS, CFS, CS and CAI for international students

	SSS	Cope	RPS	SCAS	CFS	CS	CAI
GHQ	.03	.16***	.16***	.07	-.06	.09*	.07
SSS	-	.27***	.14**	-.11*	.06	-.08	.12***
Cope		-	.28***	.28***	.03	.21***	.01
RPS			-	.10*	.12**	.23***	-.13**
SCAS				-	.33***	.07	-.11**
CFS					-	-.08	-.13**
CS						-	-.14**

Note: *** $p < .001$ RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-Cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS= Coping Flexibility Scale; CAI= Culture Assimilation Index.

The results for the last step for the hierarchical multiple regression are shown in Table 5.28. The first model was not statistically significant. The second model in total was significant, although it only accounted for 6% of the variance. The variables added in step two were also significant, accounting for 5% of the model's total explained variability. Within model 2, the strongest predictor of GHQ was RPS, followed by Cope. Therefore, in comparison to model 2, it only added 1% for the overall model. In this last model, comprising all the variables entered in the regression, RPS and Cope remained the best predictors of mental health.

However, CAI, which was introduced in this last step, was also significant. Higher scores on all these variables were associated with higher scores on GHQ.

Having found that there was a significant association between three out of seven predictor variables (coping strategy, religious, and acculturation) with mental health, therefore I rejected the null hypothesis for the three variables in favour of the alternative hypothesis to these three variables. However, results failed to find an association between four independent variables (social support, adaptation, culture stress, and coping flexibility) with mental health among the international students Therefore, I accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the alternative hypothesis.

Table 5.14 Hierarchical multiple regression for international students

	Unstand Beta	SE Unstand Beta	Stand. Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	.35	.41	.04	0.87	.393
Gender	-1.05	.48	-.09	-2.19	.029
SSS	.01	.02	-.02	-0.40	.689
Cope	.05	.02	.11	2.31	.021
RPS	.06	.02	.15	3.26	.001
SCAS	.02	.02	.05	1.08	.279
CFS	-.08	.05	-.07	-1.54	.125
CS	.03	.06	.02	0.46	.649
CAI	.18	.08	.10	2.37	.018

RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS= Coping Flexibility Scale; CAI= Culture Assimilation Index.

Model 1: $R^2 = .01$, $F(2, 535) = 2.00$, $p = .136$.

Model 2: $R^2 = .06$, $F(7, 535) = 4.55$, $p < .001$.

5.6 Moderator Analysis for Study II

5.6.1 Moderation analysis for International Students only

The moderation for Study II was conducted and calculated between Culture Stress, social support factors, and Culture Assimilation Index with mental health (see Tables 5.29 and Figure 5.30 for detail). In addition, Figure 5.29 shows simply the interaction between independent variables, moderator and outcome variable. Having found that there was a

significant association between mental health and Culture Stress influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support for international students only; therefore, I rejected the null hypothesis for Culture Stress influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support in favour of the alternative hypothesis. However, results failed to find an association between Culture Assimilation Index influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support with mental health among the international students Therefore, I accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the alternative hypothesis.

Table 5.15 Moderation (between SSS, CS with mental health for International students)

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Beta ^a	p-value ^a	R ²	Adj R ²	ΔF (p)	Df
GHQ	Model 1						
	SSS	.033	.448	.017	.012	3.111 .026	541
	CS	.107	.013				
	CAI	.082	.060				

Note: GHQ _ General Health Questionnaire, SSS: Sojourner Social Support, CS: Culture Stress and CAI= Culture Assimilation Index.

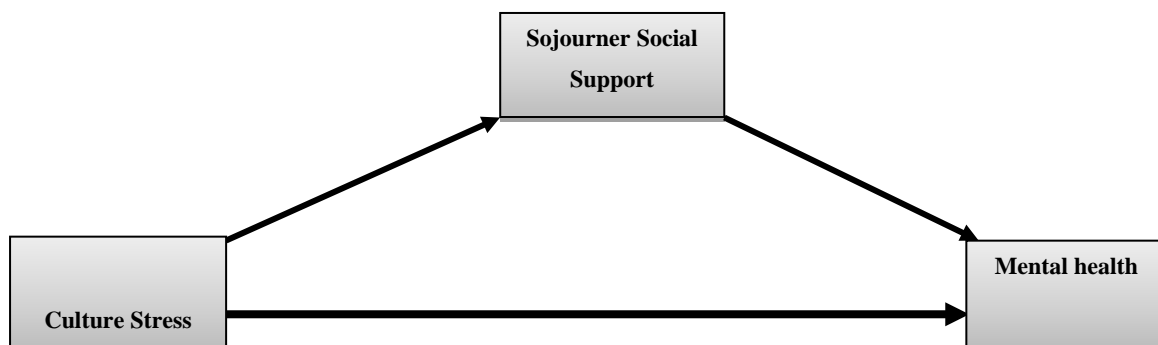


Figure 5.14 Schematic diagram of Moderation (between SSS, CS with mental health for International students)

5.6.2 Moderation analysis for International and British students

The moderation for Study II was conducted and calculated between Coping Strategies, social support factors, and Religious with mental health (see Table 5.31 and Figure 5.32 for detail). In addition, Figure 5.31 shows simply the interaction between independent variables, moderator and outcome variable. The table shows that there is a significant interaction between social support as a moderate factor influencing indirect on the relation between

Coping Strategies and Religious Problem Solving with mental health for International students.

Having found that there was a significant association between mental health and health and Coping Strategies, and Religious Problem Solving influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support for international and British students; therefore, I rejected the null hypothesis for health and Coping Strategies, and Religious Problem Solving influenced by the moderator represented in Social Support for international and British students in favour of the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, I rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis.

Table 5.16 Moderation (between SSS, Cope, RPS with mental health for International and British students)

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Beta ^a	p-value ^a	R ²	Adj R ²	ΔF (p)	Df
GHQ	Model 1						
	SSS	.188	.000	.280	.277	102.63 .000	792
	Cope	.298	.000				
	RPS	.199	.000				

Note: GHQ _ General Health Questionnaire, SSS: Sojourner Social Support, Cope: Coping Strategies and RPS= Religious.

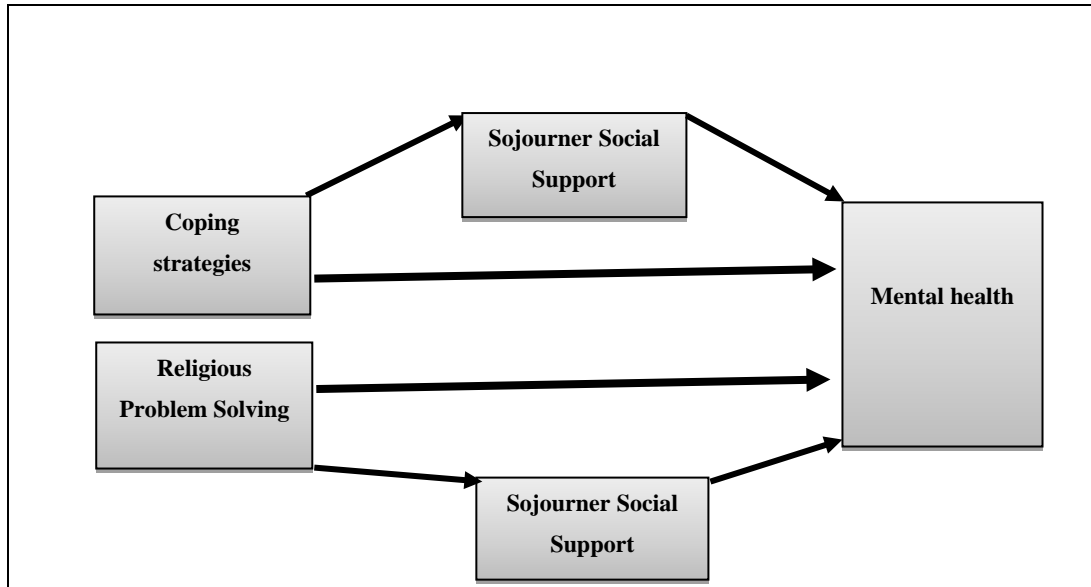


Figure 5.14 A schematic diagram of Moderation (between SSS, Cope, RPS with mental health for International and British students)

5.6.3 Discussion for Study II

Results from the quantitative research provide an overview of the variables affecting mental health in international students studying at UK universities compared to their British counterparts. To support an opportunity to answer the first initial research question, there were three areas where the effects of gender, children and families were explored, to indicate the extent of any impact these had on the mental health and wellbeing of international students. Research findings show that British students suffer from mental health problems and that British, male students suffer more mental health issues than female students. One possible explanation for this result is that many students are not willing to seek help for mental health problems as they feel a sense of tolerating a stigma that usually associates itself with mental health (National Union of Students, 2013). It was interesting to note in the results that British male students have a higher score on mental health than females, as this result was different from a recent study by Bertakis Azari, Helms, Callahan, and Pawl (1996), which revealed that in England females are more likely than males to have a common mental health problem. However, this finding which reports that British male students are higher than British female students in terms of living with a mental health problem has been supported by Andrews & Wilding (2004).

On the other hand with respect to the international students, there is a fairly similar pattern of association. For instance, the international students are also shown to suffer from mental health problems and in a similar way international male students suffer more from mental health issues than the female students. The key finding is that male students in both groups show higher suffering from mental health than female students. To clarify this reason behind the present findings, the results from the qualitative study will help come up with a potential explanation.

In terms of seeking help, it is possible that both genders of international students lack the communication skills to convey their concerns about their mental health and thereby gain the appropriate mental health counselling, which may influence their mental health condition. In addition, living in a mixed environment atmosphere may encourage international students to engage with others students (Summers & Volet, 2008) and thereby may reduce any concerns they may have about their mental health. However, most UK universities now provide social support services in a variety of aspects and these are more accessible to students (Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). It was identified that there was a substantial association between psychological health and three of the variables, namely coping flexibility, social support and adaptation. Regarding key discussion, this outcome represents meaning that students who are higher in flexibility, social support, and adaptation will show different mental health compared with those who score lower. It may be that teaching them how to use coping flexibility to deal with a variety of different issues will in turn help with adaptation.

The findings of this study show that British male students report higher levels of coping strategy than females. However, it was the opposite with the international students, where females perceive higher levels of coping strategy compared to males. It can be surmised that for British male students, this can probably be attributed to their experience of life and their familiarity with the places to go where they can gain help to cope with any issue they may be facing in their environment (Ashford & Lawrence, 2007). There is no ready answer for the British females having a lower coping strategy, unless they do not face so many challenges as males; alternatively, they may face more barriers during times when they must decide to forego their full time studies. However, the international students may encounter difficulties for males to cope with any issue they might be facing, due to their lack of experience and perhaps language barriers or other obstacles. On the other hand females may obtain assistance from a wider range of people than the males, due to their more sensitive and emotional

aspects (Burns, 1991). This may help to explain why they may have better coping strategies for successfully dealing with any issue they may be facing (Forster & Offei-Ansah, 2012).

The use of religion to help resolve any problems faced was reported as being higher in males from both groups than females. It is difficult to explain such an interesting result, but this finding could be clarified by conducting the interviews. The results show that international and UK students with children use religious aspects to support them in reducing barriers they may encounter. This was also identified in Smith's (2009) study; indeed, Smith identified that American students were much more influenced by their parents' religious beliefs and practices, and that they tended to solve any problems they might be facing in their life in a similar way to their parents. It has been shown in other studies that religion can be a powerful influence on helping people to cope with life's difficulties (Ellison & Levin, 1998), and it can be acknowledged that for those who are religious, of whatever faith, then religion may be a significant factor in coping. The impact that religion has on individuals is that it may help them mentally and spiritually (Carone & Barone, 2001), and this gives them more strength to face up to any problems they may encounter. Yet it was difficult to clarify a lack of association between coping strategies, religious problem solving and mental health in the findings, which was at variance with the individual variables for the international students.

It was also seen that both sets of students, whether international or home students, who have children, have higher scores on mental health than those who have no children. However, the British students tend to have a higher disposition towards mental health issues than international students, regardless of having children. To a certain extent the international students tend to be more protected financially than the British students as they have scholarships and companies or governments sponsoring them. This means that there is not the same amount of financial pressure on international students as on British students, who may be taking out student loans which are not sufficient for their needs, or trying to take on paid employment to cover their costs (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). British students with children do have a higher level of seeking social support, which may come from them being under more pressures but it may also be because they know where to find such social support.

The impact of having children is seen more clearly in the way that students without children have better coping styles. Students who are single or who do not have children appear to adapt better to their new environment and are more able to deal with any problems they may encounter; nor do they feel the same restrictions as to changes in their social life. This may be

because those married with children have more familial responsibilities than single students. However, international students with children tend to use coping flexibility more, which may indicate that they face different challenges, compared with the UK students; Gan et al. (2007) suggest that this is because they may need to put more efforts into coping with any emergent conditions to be able to adapt to the new culture. British students already have a lot of knowledge and skills to help them cope without needing to resort to a variety of strategies, whereas international students may find themselves facing unexpected and unfamiliar problems and may need to learn how to cope.

As these links appear to show none-significance between living with families and general mental health, it may be argued that living with a family does not provides students with support in coping with stress, not does it contribute to stress. On the other hand, for the students who are not living with families, it may be that they are free from responsibilities if they are no longer living with their parents. This has been suggested by Leninger (1994) who attributes low stress levels in students due to freedom from family responsibilities, although there is anticipation that students living away from their families may suffer more from distress, due to being lonely. The results from this study do not indicate this.

There was also no connection between level of adaptation with living in the new environment across student groups. To a certain extent, this may be anticipated with UK students who, although they may be in a different city, are familiar with the way things are done. However, with the international students this is more surprising. One possibility is that the groups that were surveyed were not all newcomers and may have been in their third or fourth year of study at a UK university, and therefore may have been more familiar with the environment. Although the current study did not deal with during their time spent in the UK among the international students, it is logical to mention this speculation in order to further clarify my results.

From the results it is shown that there are three particular areas that have an impact on the mental health of British students. These are social support, social adaption and coping flexibility. Studies have shown that there is a low association level in both variables seeking of social support and poor mental as well as physical health outcomes (Duru, 2007); furthermore, it has been noted that students who are able to gain such a support from a number of sources seem to adapt more effectively (Levitt et al., 2005). This may be one of the reasons why the British students score more highly in this respect, as they have access to

multiple sources of support; such support comes from family, friends and significant others (which could include professionals). In terms of gender, Duru (2007) found that female students had more support from friends and family, whereas (Eskeret al., 2001) reported that men received a higher level of support from significant others. This may indicate that males prefer discussing any issues with professionals, but females prefer taking about their problems with close friend and family.

For international students it is shown in this study that there is more dependence on coping skills, especially related to religion. A study by Hafizi, Tabatabaei, and Koenig (2014) found an inverse relationship between mental health and religious involvement in Iranian Muslim students, although other studies have indicated that religious beliefs can provide comfort and help with stress relief (Koenig, 2007; Van der Kolk, Hostetler, Herron, & Fisler, 1994). The findings in this study indicated that religious problem solving was higher in males than females. This does not mean that females do not use religion as a coping strategy, as a study by Aldahadba (2013) of Muslim female students in Oman showed that there is a relationship between religious practices (such as praying that equates with meditation) and stressful situations. Suhail and Shabnam (2010) also found that religion played a positive role in the lives of many Muslims and helped them cope with negative life events. Loewenthal, MacLeod, and Cinnirella (2001) reported that Muslims in the UK believed more than any other religious groups that religious practices helped people cope with depression. A further study on Muslim university students in the UK found that they perceived their life as meaningful and this consequently had an impact on psychological well-being as a coping strategy (Aflakseir, 2012). However, gender has not been taken into account in other studies and therefore they do not show whether or not the difference between male and female Muslim students.

Social support revealed in this study that influences as a moderating factor is present in the association between culture stress and mental health for international students only. However, there is a single possibility that explains this particular key finding, which is probably that social support is given to international students in various ways, such as families and friends; and the host families or universities or local social support communities might boost and strengthen willpower to deal with any issue faced. These results aligned with the findings obtained from the study conducted by Shavitt et al. (2016) entitled “Culture Moderates the Relation Between Perceived Stress, Social Support, and Mental and Physical Health”, which

were achieved by conducting a survey amongst numerous American cultures, races and ethnic groups.

Furthermore, this current study noted that social support did influence as a moderating factor in the association between religious problem solving and coping strategies with mental health for both international and British students. These results aligned with the key findings obtained from the study conducted by (Park, 2013) in Japan, which revealed that social support plays a significant factor as a moderator in the association of mental health with coping strategies and religion. However, most of the studies in the body of literature address this issue in terms of one nationality, such as Chinese students (Alidoost, 2011) or Nigerian students (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, 2013; Oyewunmi, Oyewunmi, Iyiola, & Ojo, 2015), which revealed that social support is an effective factor as a moderator when used to investigate the association between mental health and other variables. Therefore, I can conclude that this current study is consistent with these studies despite the variance in the types of sampling.

5.7 Summary

This chapter aimed to address three of the research questions. Results suggest that the impact of gender differs, in general for British and international students, especially in relation to coping, the use of religion for problem solving, cultural adaptation and coping flexibility, where male British students do much better than male international students. Having children proved to affect British and international students differently. British students with children showed higher scores on all measures compared to international students with children, whilst both student groups with no children scored similarly. Finally, living with family affected British and international students differently on social support, coping strategies and religious problem solving, where British students who lived with their families reported higher scores than international students with the same living arrangements.

In addition, the results indicate that social adaptation, support and coping flexibility all have the highest impact upon the British students' mental health. On the hand, coping skills, religion and the level of cultural adaptation of international students are what helps them the most with their mental health. Consequently, these findings suggest that British and international students differ in terms of what may drive their mental health status. British students seem to rely more on social support and cognitive strategies, whilst international students rely on different coping strategies, including religious ones as well as cultural adaptation. However, the fit of the model (R^2) was high for British students (60%) and very

low for international students (7%). This is a strong indicator that the variables included in this study are a good model for British students' mental health, but a poor one for international students. International students' mental health is likely to be associated with two additional variables (CS and CAI), which were not included in this model.

This study tested social support as a moderator between both groups and it found that social support is an effective moderator factor in mental health in studying abroad. Numerous significant outcomes were obtained for Study II, which were supported for the results obtained from the study. However, there were many unexpected findings obtained from study II, requiring more clarification; therefore interviews with students were required to clarify these unclear results. Therefore, the researcher proceeded to embark upon another study, Study III. The next chapter looks at the findings from the qualitative data, collected through metaphor analysis. This may support the study to label and provide more critical understanding of the ways in which international students perceive the challenges of life in the UK. The next chapter discusses Study III in detail.

6 Chapter Six: Qualitative Approach: Study III

6.1 Introduction

This current chapter presents key points regarding the interviews conducted for the qualitative study, the demographics and the interview schedule, as well as the approach used for analysing the data. The next section introduces the metaphors and how these were elicited, as well as the way in which they were analysed. Issues on reflexivity and trustworthiness are then discussed. Finally, the demographic variable considerations of the current study are described and it is shown how these have been addressed.

The research question for Study III was “How can metaphors be used by international students in describing their experiences and challenges in facing issues during their studying in the UK?” To address this, the following aim was formulated: to explore perceptions from the international students’ perspectives in the context of their acculturation and culture stress while they study in UK universities. The views of the international students follow the context of using metaphors to describe their experiences, while they study in UK universities. In addition, the thoughts and feelings of the international students in the context of using metaphors describe their challenges and issues they face while they study in UK universities.

This chapter provides the findings of interviews conducted with a further 30 students, where they were requested to describe how they might be feeling regarding certain aspects of life, and were asked to use two qualitative questionnaires to answer questions and complete sentences using metaphors. In this way they produced a wide variety of metaphors, which this chapter attempts to interpret, such action occurring in order to present in-depth understanding of the experiences of international students. The participants were selected purposively from various UK universities and were interviewed individually throughout 2014, each interview lasting about 30 minutes. An initial pilot study took place with eight international students agreeing to be interviewed; this was used as training and helped to shape the main study, which involved the 30 interviews.

6.2 Rationale of the qualitative approach

It has been shown in the literature (Smith & Khawaja, 2011) that there is a gap in acculturation studies relating to qualitative evidence about international students' experiences. As mentioned earlier, a limited amount of qualitative research has been conducted, and these tended to build on findings identified in quantitative studies. There have also been some other studies relating to specific cultural groups: South Asian immigrants in Canada (Akram, 2012); Russian immigrants in Sweden (Blomstedt, Hylander, & Sundquist, 2007); Romanian immigrants in the UK (Pantiru & Barley, 2014). However, these studies were based on interviews with participants to find explanations of the lived experiences of these migrants. This qualitative study tries to offer new viewpoints regarding the experiences of migrants within multiple cultural surroundings by employing thematic analysis of the metaphors that international students used to describe the life experiences in the host society.

A metaphor is a figure of speech where a name or quality is given to something with which it seems to have no connection, yet it is used to make a comparison; it can be a word, or phrase, or presents an image that adds meaning or interest to language, as it adds an imaginative dimension (Fadaee, 2011). Metaphors are useful for understanding how people create their own realities (Kaviani & Hamed, 2011), as the comparisons they make often reflect views or attitudes that individuals would not normally disclose; their purpose is to describe something or someone in a way that is more concise, comprehensive and complex than by using literal language (Newmark, 1988). In a way they are opening hidden avenues to the way people think or feel. Metaphors are usually culture-bound, so are particularly beneficial for use in cultural contexts as they reflect thoughts and emotions (Seligman, 1990) and thus they can give an indication of the feelings people may be experiencing (Kaviani & Hamed, 2011). As this study encompasses both the exploration of psychological wellbeing and the impact a different cultural environment may have on international students, the use of metaphors is appropriate for eliciting further information on the perceptions of these students to their experiences at a university in the UK; they can enable some insight into how international students may feel about their new cultural setting.

6.3 Participants

Finding participants who can provide clarity to the phenomenon under investigation is one of the major goals of sampling in order to enhance our learning about that phenomenon. Therefore, I selected precisely 30 international students to be interviewed during the designated time when the research was carried out. These students were also selected according to the criterion of accessibility (Silverman, 2001). The interviewees were mostly selected from Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and London universities because of the ease of contacting those students, and due to their proximity to my location. Three universities were selected for conducting Study III and three student unions and the student international clubs were visited. They were provided with all the information about this study and their assistance was sought in the recruitment for a purposive sample in all three universities. Indeed, all of these universities were cooperative in the process of recruitment. The sample of the interviewees in the qualitative study was 30 international students chosen from three varied universities (15 international students from the University of Bedfordshire, 8 international students from Hertfordshire University, 7 international students from East London University), as illustrated in Table 6.1. The interviews were conducted individually. The purpose of making a time plan was to organise the data and manage all the appointments with the interviewees. Regarding the time plan, it shows that the interviewer met the interviewees in different universities and at different times, which were suitable for the interviewees (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Interview timetable with the interviewees

Date and day of interview	Time of interview	Gender	Location	Date and day of interview	Time of interview	Gender	Location
Mon 1/12/2014	10-11 am	F	Bedfordshire	Mon 09/02/2015	9-10 am	M	Hertfordshire
	4.30-5.30 pm	M	Bedfordshire		3-4 pm	M	Hertfordshire
Tue 2/12/2014	9.30-10.30 am	F	Bedfordshire	Fri 13/02/2015	10-11 am	F	Hertfordshire
	3-4 pm	M	Bedfordshire		2-3 pm	M	Hertfordshire
Wed 10/12/2014	10-11 am	M	Bedfordshire	Tus 17/02/2015	10-11 am	F	Hertfordshire
	4-5 pm	F	Bedfordshire		4-5 pm	M	Hertfordshire
Fri 09/01/2015	10-11 am	M	Bedfordshire	Thur 19/02/2015	9-10 am	F	Hertfordshire
	2-3 pm	F	Bedfordshire		3-4 pm	F	Hertfordshire
Wed 14/01/2015	10-11 am	M	Bedfordshire	Mon 23/02/2015	10-11 am	F	East London
	12-1 pm	F	Bedfordshire		3-4 pm	M	East London
Mon 19/01/2015	10.30-11.30 am	M	Bedfordshire	Fri 27/02/2015	10-11 am	M	East London
	4-5 pm	F	Bedfordshire		3-4 pm	M	East London
Wed 28/01/2015	10-11 pm	M	Bedfordshire	Mon 02/03/2015	11-12 pm	F	East London
	5-6 pm	M	Bedfordshire		3-4 pm	F	East London
Fri 06/02/2015	10-11 pm	M	Bedfordshire	Tus 03/03/2015	2-3 pm	M	East London

In terms of the qualitative data, a more purposive sampling approach was used. There was much support from the leaders of the Saudi clubs, who were willing and supportive from the outset, and accompanied and introduced the interviewer to meet as many potential interviewees as possible; these people were from different nationalities. In addition, these leaders of the Saudi clubs again used their resources to locate suitable participants within easy access for conducting interviews. Denscombe (2003) suggests that purposive sampling is applied when the researcher already knows something about the purpose for selecting specific people; the interviewer was required to use their own judgment as to which participants they needed to interview, based on their knowledge of their own international student background. As discussed earlier, these students were selected from universities that were more accessible as they were to be interviewed face-to-face. As suggested by Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005), purposive sampling promises efficiency as a technique used for gathering relevant knowledge from participants, who have the required experience or knowledge of the issues being researched. The participants were international and British students already studying at a UK university, who had some experience of life in the UK.

6.4 Rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 3) provide a definition of an interview as “a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in everyday conversations, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge”. As Stokes and Bergin (2006) emphasized when identifying multiple forms of research interviews, he categorized them into three types: fully structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Whilst the structured and semi-structured interview may have pre-determined questions, the latter allows more flexibility in the approach the interviewer takes. I chose to use a semi-structured approach as it enabled me to modify it where needed based on the aims of the study. Within the perspective and research of Cohen & Crabtree, (2006), semi-structured interviewing is best utilised when the interviewer will only get a single opportunity to interview the research participant. Based on the semi-structured interview guide, it is distinguishable with clarity that a set of instructions for interviewers can present comparable, reliable, qualitative data if open-ended questions are included (Cohen, 2006).

As Cohen affirms, many studies prefer to utilise semi-structured interviews for good reason due to the simplicity of preparing accurate and reasonable questions in advance to stay organised with time. With these preferences, the interviewer has the capability to be better prepared and well organised to demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge when interviewing the participant.

A semi-structured interview also allows interviewees the opportunity to express their feelings and experience within the safe confines of the interview with full confidence and trust. This study used two qualitative questionnaires generated by Kaviani and Hamed (2011), which were tailored and used to gather metaphors from the interviewees, to define their experiences in the UK. These two questionnaires consisted of eight questions and eight uncompleted written sentences, which the interviewees had to answer verbally and in writing.

Interviews allow for more in-depth information from different perspectives and they can add to understanding as they provide views and opinions of individuals. They are also able to provide data relating specifically to the topic under investigation, if they are carried out being mindful of the aims and objectives. This is especially so with a semi-structured approach, where the interviewer has more power and control over the course of the interview than with a structured interview (Nunan, 1992). It was important to achieve the study's objectives and an unstructured interview may have led off in a different direction. Semi-structured interviews were used, when other sources of data collection were not adequate for providing more descriptive information on the challenges facing international students in the UK, such as culture stress and coping strategies which may be adopted by them. To start the process, the interviews began with three initial questions to help the participants relax. Two qualitative questionnaires were used during the interviews and it was explained how these were to be answered. The purpose of the interview questionnaires was to collect metaphors that international students use to describe their experiences in their new cultural environment.

The 30 interviewees were asked some initial questions, before moving on to using the questionnaires. These questions were about their existing feelings towards studying abroad and were audio-recorded. The recordings were later transcribed for analysis and the findings were grouped into certain categories reflecting different themes and sub-themes. Comments were made on the responses, both written and the transcribed versions, interpreted and analysed according to the metaphoric themes. All metaphor entries were double-checked with an expert psychologist and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

As suggested by Dornyei (2007), who indicated that before conducting an interview a trial run must be formulated, this was taken into consideration and implemented with two experts. The results were then discussed with two experts. It was suggested that probing questions happen more commonly and be added especially when concentrating upon the right sections and noting what the challenges might be when encountered, suggesting clarification of some of the terms used, such as 'homesickness'. Having made modifications in response to the pilot, arrangements were then made by phone with 30 international students in different universities in the UK and we agreed on a specific date and time that was convenient for both sides. The interview sessions lasted for approximately 30 minutes with each student and were verified through the use of a digital voice recorder that permitted the ability to hold on to all of recordings securely on the computer hard drive. The interviews were conducted in English as all students preferred this; therefore there was no need to use an interpreter.

During the start of each interview, the purpose of the study was carefully outlined and each interviewee was fully informed about the research process, in that anything they said would be used for research purposes only and that all records would be kept in a safe place within the university, the data protected by a password that both the researcher and his supervisor can access. A copy of the interviewee information leaflet was given to each individual to retain, so they could contact the researcher or his supervisors, should they wish to withdraw from the study, or if they had any complaint or wanted further information about the research project. These forms were signed by the interviewee and a copy of this was retained. Once the interviews were completed, the participants were asked for their email address so that a copy of the transcribed interview could be sent to them for approval. One interviewee was not included within the 30 research participants, as he withdrew his consent during the interview process, and all his records were immediately deleted.

6.5 Metaphors

There have been studies on international students but they have mainly used quantitative data and there is not enough information covering the mental health of international students and their perception of their experiences in the UK. That is why metaphors have been used to provide more information on this aspect. Metaphors are figures of speech that use rhetoric so as to refer to something as being the same as another thing (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). In other words, a metaphor directly equates to things; a cognitive process is therefore required to understand the metaphors (Newall & Broder, 2008). Some situations may require

language users to employ the non-literal use of language to enhance meaning (Vulchanova, Saldana, Chahboun, & Vulchanov, 2015). Primarily, metaphors may provide clarity, or sometimes be used to clarify similarities between two things that may not be quite obvious. Metaphors may be used to express description of behaviours or description of emotional states. Studies show that more metaphorical language is employed in the expression of emotions than is used for behavioural description (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987); for further clarification about this, see Chapter 6. Moreover, the kinds of metaphors used differ according to cultural background; those from Eastern cultures tend to use language that is more in physiological terms rather than psychological terms (Farooq, Gahir, Okyere, & Oyeboode, 1995). As Kaviani, Sagan, and Pournaseh (2015) argue, people from different cultural backgrounds use more somatic words to express their emotions. This finding is in line with what Farouq et al. (1995) say. This study takes particular interest in the use of metaphors by international students to express their emotions about their new environment.

The presence of international students in most British universities has been on the rise in the past few decades. International students are attracted partially by the quality of education offered by British universities as well as the availability of scholarships for students in the developing world (Altbach & Knight, 2007). International students are from diverse backgrounds and provide different linguistic as well as cultural history from those of the native British students. The understanding of metaphor requires a sophisticated understanding of background assumptions behind them, which are significantly different across different cultures. It has been noted that people travelling from Asian countries are likely to communicate their feelings and emotions through the use of physical complaints (Farooq et al., 1995; Kleinman & Kleinman, 1985). The use of metaphors by people from different cultures, therefore, presents challenges sometimes leading to a misunderstanding between students. Such disagreements may lead the students to stray from the topic at hand, as the ways in which international students conceptualise their emotional problems as being related to physical complaints may conceal issues associated with mental health.

Metaphorical figures differ across languages due to the fundamental differences in how people express basic everyday concepts. It is, therefore, difficult to conceive metaphorical figures in a different language. A primary example is between Chinese speakers and those who speak English. The English language classifies events of the future as being in front of them while those of the past are referred to as being behind. On the other hand, Chinese

sometimes employs the opposite orientation; the future may be behind because they cannot see it; likewise, the past cannot be seen (Littlemore, Chen, Koester, & Barnden, 2011). A Chinese speaker speaking in English may sound contradictory because their use of time in speech appears to be conflicting while mostly it reflects how the speaker is thinking about time.

Despite the challenges that metaphors present, especially for international students, their use in a university setting is still common, and one may wonder why. Lecturers and instructors find the use of metaphors particularly important to explain concepts in their disciplines or sometimes to organize their lessons (Schwartz & Fischer 2006). Students may also find metaphors important in defining their schedules, planning for assignments, or handing in complete work; Littlemore, MacArthur, Cienki, and Holloway (2012) describe how the frequent use of metaphors that British academics use may confuse those coming from a different culture. They note particular terms used, such as ‘struggling to keep up’, ‘sticking to the upper limit’ and ‘meeting a deadline’. International students, however, may find difficulty in picking up such metaphors, possibly due to underachievement in their academic work, and as a consequence, the meanings may be completely misunderstood. Even so, such problems can easily be overcome if the students seek clarification on the contentious metaphors. As Littlemore et al. (2012) point out, it is very easy for students to believe that their lecturers are using literal language, when in fact it is metaphorical. Likewise, if the lecturers realise that metaphorical speech may bring comprehension problems, they would articulate their ideas more clearly (Glucksberg & Keysar, 1990).

While the use of metaphors in an academic environment is essential for active learning, international students may also find it valuable to express their emotions using metaphors. Emotions are best expressed by use of figurative language (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987), and international students may often see the need to articulate how they are adapting to the new environment. The unobservable internal feelings are difficult to express through the use of literal language; metaphors are therefore used to capture that which is difficult to convey. Studies also suggest that the use of metaphors varies with the intensity of the emotions being expressed. Users of a language are more likely to employ metaphors when expressing deeper feelings than mild ones (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987). Due to the cultural differences between international students, it takes time for them to adapt to the new setting and they often find the need to express to someone close how they feel about such differences. International

students from the same country or region are therefore more likely to be friends since they quickly understand each other's metaphors (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2013) and might not necessarily feel out of place (De Man, 1978).

Metaphors are an integral part of any language as they are an essential element of figurative speech. However, due to the cultural and linguistic ties that metaphors possess, they may often lead to problems for speakers of different backgrounds, as Aliakbari and Faraji (2013) and Deignan, Gabryś, and Solska (1997) indicate. Nonetheless, international students still find the use of metaphors as an important means to express emotions. International students may have different challenges adapting to British universities, and there is a need to present the emotions that they feel to their peers. Despite the cultural differences, metaphors remain an effective way of conveying that which everyday words cannot express (Grey, 2000).

In using metaphors as a way of exploring emotions in international students at UK universities, this study makes valuable input to the literature review especially regarding the challenges they face, but it provides deeper insight into the emotions that such students are experiencing.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1987) have done a great deal of work on the study of cognitive linguistics, as they believe that language plays a significant role in understanding underlying behaviors and issues; this is especially so when people use metaphors to describe their feelings and attitudes. Their theory on the use of metaphors has led to this becoming an important way of analysing language. This study uses thematic analysis of metaphors to explore the experiences of students studying in a foreign country. The choice of using metaphors was because they pick up attitudes, feelings and thoughts that may not be apparent in other responses.

6.5.1 Use of metaphor eliciting questionnaires

Two qualitative questionnaires designed by Kaviani and Hamed (2011) were tailored and used to collect metaphors from student participants to describe their experiences in the UK. These two questionnaires consist of eight questions and eight uncompleted written sentences, respectively. They have been modified for the purposes of this study, and start with three initial questions developed by the researcher. This allowed participants to express their attitudes towards living in the UK. Using the two qualitative questionnaires (eight questions and eight uncompleted written sentences), participants were then asked to use metaphors that

best describe their lives in the host society responding to questions or completing incomplete sentences. They were then categorised and the responses coded, so that it was possible to make sense of their thoughts and feelings about living in the UK as international students.

Most of the responses could be analysed thematically, and connections had to be identified across the themes. Initially, this was done by using sub-categories. In order to generate the initial codes which gave the metaphor themes, exploratory content analysis was first used, in order to carry out thematic analysis within the interpretative phenomenological analysis spectrum (see Figure 6.2).

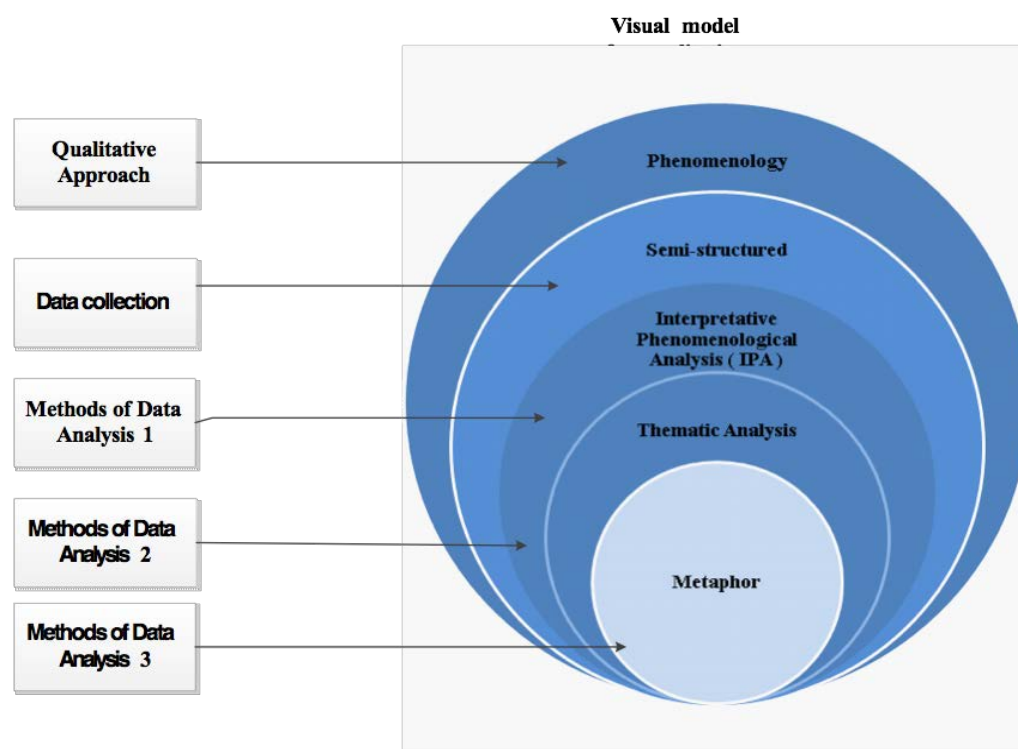


Figure 6.1 A model for qualitative study

6.6 Data Analysis

6.6.1 Technique support the analysis

Before the data collection took place, the following technical considerations were checked in order to ensure the quality of the data and findings: the processes for recording interview data and data transcription. For recording interview data, a high quality digital voice recorder was used, which facilitated the transcribing process. The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts checked again for accuracy. In order to protect the interviewee's

identity, the informant's name was replaced on the transcript with a pseudonym and by removing or changing any information that would readily identify the informant.

6.6.1.1 Initial analysis for Study III

Data analysis is a complex processes when qualitative psychological research is involved, but also one of the most important, to ensure that the data are interpreted accurately, and that they are able to answer the research questions. As previously discussed, two research methods were used to collect qualitative data, these included questions that lead towards other interrelated research areas in the questionnaire, which are also present within semi-structured interviews. In reference to analysing the qualitative data, participants' responses to the questions and the uncompleted written sentences applied in Study III, and the semi-structured interview plus the observer's notes that were brought to attention through coding also went through an analysing qualitative phase. Furthermore, data was critically transcribed and categorized thematically that resulted in the emergence of main themes. These were then compared and this necessitated a constant reading and re-reading of the responses (Lalik & Potts, 2001). By using this method of data analysis, it helped in understanding the data and sorting into topics and themes.

Metaphors were identified using the concept that they are going through a process whereby the primary function is witness their true intentions, feelings and thoughts that can be more easily understood through utilizing a metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, one international student may feel liberated through their travels, being seen like a bird flying freely from place to place, compared to other international students who might experience the opposite feeling and describe their situation like going through a dark tunnel with uncertainties as to what might be at the end of that tunnel.

In this way we can find ways of defining the realities around us, as metaphors can often help in expressing abstract terms in more concrete realities (Hashemian & Nezhad, 2013). These metaphors were listed and then categorised, bearing in mind that the expressed metaphoric phrases related to international students' feelings and thoughts. Most of the students' responses were suitable for thematic analysis, once the content had been explored. There was a need to identify connections across these themes, by putting the extracted metaphors into as many subordinate categories as they would fit.

6.6.1.2 Thematic Analysis (TA)

One of the main common qualitative data analysis approaches is thematic analysis. Favourably, this approach is beneficial to the construction of this research, as it is one of the main collective methods that identify patterns or themes in the data and has been an extensively applied method of analysing narrative data. In other words, this thematic analysis is credible, reliable and widely used and is profoundly useful when combining together two qualitative styles together (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Furthermore, it is particularly applicable to address questions in the research that focus on individual's everyday experiences that they encounter, to therefore understand individual's perception as well as their views. Evidently, according to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) this style of analysing is especially useful for developing themes because it captures and creates the opportunity for individuals to express their humanity in a critical situation; this human experience can be extracted and critically analysed to enhance the current knowledge within this topic. TA was accomplished through the process of coding the data where information within phases can establish meaningful patterns. These phases began with becoming familiar within the outcome data, producing initial codes, filtering through potential themes that are found in the codes, and then later conducting a review of those essential themes (Smith, 2015).

6.6.1.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Brocki and Wearden (2014) argued that phenomenological ways of carrying out an analysis, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), carries a high level of importance within the field of methodology for implementation as a qualitative psychological framework. Multiple sources and research publications that utilise IPA place specific priority on the examination phase that provides an essential opportunity to understand the given meanings behind an individual's everyday life situations they experience (Smith et al., 2009; Eatough & Smith, 2017). In other words, an investigation would allow the chance to know how individuals place meaning or find a purpose through each unique experience they go through in their life.

Furthermore, IPA is a predominantly valuable methodology used for exploring topics which are complicated, not clear to measure and potentially contain sensitive feelings and thought which can appear through the experience that normally challenging to discuss in dialogue

(Smith, 2015), which provides a qualitative study with the needed tools to interpret human experience which can be more easily analysed when attempting to find key themes.

According to Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008), IPA has very beneficial purposes when capturing, reviewing and analysing new themes, for example it is essentially a simple model to use as an effective research tool which is transferable to any topic that it is applied to. Foremost, IPA is dedicated to spending a long time to understand people's experiences, because it allows them as the participant to feel empowered when transparently sharing their emotions regarding situations they might have faced. Interestingly, this IPA approach seems to always conclude something completely different from what the research originally anticipated (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

Thus, phenomenology is demonstrated to play a key role in utilizing IPA, whereby the aims hold a specific explanation that provides an individual with a platform to express their life experiences through self-expression, rather than communicating through a fixed theory that may influence their thoughts and feelings (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

6.6.1.4 Processing of data analysis through integrating two methods (TA and IPA)

Within the framework of IPA, thematic analysis (TA) took place. Thematic analysis means identifying themes or patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the enabling of the potential of the researcher is developed to improve a theoretical framework based on the patterns emerging and this flexibility means that the data can be analysed more accurately as it is not constrained to any one theory. Although it was within the overall IPA framework, this focused on the patterns rather than the perceptions of the participants; however, the perspectives of the participants shaped the patterns that were emerging. It is more time-consuming than many other methods of analysis, as the data must be scrutinised on many occasions (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Categories are generated but these may be adapted as more data emerges (Fereday & Cochrane, 2006). Thematic analysis is regarded as being the most appropriate method for discovering data using interpretations, as different relationships can be compared between concepts (Joffe, 2012). Patterns were highlighted rigorously using a procedure of familiarity with the data, coding the data, and development of the themes and revision in the following way. Firstly, the interviews were transcribed from the recordings to witness very familiar patterns with the data. Secondly, these were then coded according to important features that were identified as being relevant to the research

questions. The next step was to examine these codes and search for themes which could signify patterns of meaning.

These themes were then reviewed to see if any could be combined and related to my research questions. For greater understanding of this process see Figure 6.1, where the model for qualitative study breaks down the steps of phenomenology as a qualitative approach, semi-structured data collection, interpreting using methods of IPA which selects and thematically creates themes and finally, the use of metaphors to analyse and bridge the gap to reach those sensitive areas that are considered to be valuable and likely to contain significant patterns which can be reviewed to expose new arising themes. In other words, multiple themes can be combined together (see Figure 6.2) and a new emerging theme can be exposed using theoretical model metaphors.

Once the first stage of analysis was finished, namely thematic analysis had been carried out, all the metaphors were then categorised into main themes, sub-themes and sub-sub-themes. The second method of Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) was then performed, which gathers the data from the individual's perspective. This is a framework for conducting qualitative research within the psychology field (Brocki & Weardon, 2006). As it suggests, it is an interpretation of events and deals with individuals and their subjective accounts, rather than objective factual information (Smith, 1996). It focuses on what individuals perceive of events (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). As Kaviani and Hamed (2011) suggest, the researcher must make sense of the data collected through a process of carefully assessing, reviewing and re-checking the data. Such an approach allows the experiences of individuals to be described and developed, and this helps to understand such experiences (Fadde, 2004).

6.7 Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness is explained as a relevant group of specific criteria that advocates writers for their efforts through an assessment of quality to know the standard of qualitative research used (Bryman, 2015). For a qualitative study to be trustworthy, importance is found when suggesting credible, reliable and relevant criteria that are needed to be achieved and can also be transferred (Given, 2008).

In relation to dependability, this is defined by Schwandt and Schwandt (2001) as being able to confidently know that the enquiry steps are realistic in terms of tracing and ensuring that they are documented. This study had specific research questions to answer and it set about answering these in a determined and logical process by using research tools that would

facilitate this. All responses were then shown to be clearly documented and the process for analysis was logically conducted using categorization and coding.

Conformability reflects the need to ensure that the interpretations and findings match the data (Given, 2008). In other words, no claims are made that cannot be supported by the data. Conformability was achieved in the current study by doing two things. Firstly, a clear description has been given on what basis the research data was gathered and analysed. This was supported by the feedback given by colleagues and supervisors. Secondly, use was made of what Given (2008) calls a trail of auditing, where an independent reviewer was asked to check the research process and interpretations of the data. Finally, all the written transcripts of the interviews were returned to the research participants by e-mail to make sure that they were consistent with their perceptions. This resulted in a few changes being made but this ensured that the data were accurate.

One of the most crucial aspects for creating an opportunity for trustworthiness is credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This relates to the study setting out to test what it intends to explore. One way of doing this is by using procedures that have been tried and tested in previous projects (Shenton, 2004). The procedures used were ones that had been carried out in similar studies of international students; the measures that were used had all been validated and were well established. Additionally, the ways in which data were collected and the results analysed were all known procedures. It was also beneficial to be familiar with ways in which to gain access to the university students, the gatekeepers involved and the international clubs. Although random sampling is likely to provide evidence of credibility, the convenience sampling that was carried out was not dissimilar, in that there was no control over the choice of those who were available during the study. The use of different methods of data collection also helped establish credibility and Van Maanen (1979) argues that the perspectives of different interviewees can provide triangulation as different experiences and viewpoints can be verified against each other. In addition, credibility is supported by reflexivity, which took place throughout the study.

Transferability means that the study may be applied to different contexts (Shenton, 2004); the study must therefore show clear methodology in order for the study to be replicated by other researchers, so that it can be used as a point of reference. Notwithstanding the main points that the results of this research are related to international students in a number of universities

in the UK, this study can also be associated with different cultures and provide the foundation for further comparability studies.

6.7.1 Ethical Issues for Study III

For the qualitative study, there were different ethical considerations to take into account. The interviewees had to give their informed consent before the interview, and this was carried out by presenting them with an information form in advance of the interview date. This form detailed the reason for the research, how the interviews would take place, how the information provided would be used, and contact addresses of the research team. Just before the interviews took place, I went through the information again with each interviewee and they were asked if they had any questions about the study. They were then requested to sign the consent form before the interview could take place. They were advised that being involved in the interview was entirely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time before, during, or after the interview.

The information sheet given to the participants clearly outlined that the discussions would be recorded and transcribed, and then later verified. The participants were informed that their names would never be used and that all recordings would later be destroyed. Confidentiality was assured by the removal of interviewee contact details from the interview transcripts, so that the data was kept anonymous. However, confidential information relating to the identification of the interviewees was retained for verification purposes, and this was securely and confidentially kept in a responsible place at the University of Bedfordshire.

6.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a methodological issue in a research process. The relationship between cause and effect is difficult to distinguish and cannot be avoided in a research process. While it is important to maintain the objectivity of a study by using standard practices, including avoiding researcher-participant interdependency, it is also important to use methods that will ensure quality data are collected. Researchers are often faced with the dilemma of using persons that could just as well be the subject of the research as an interviewer in a research process. Reflexivity is, therefore, a circular relationship and cannot be avoided; any research process should, therefore, strive to be objective even when the research tools may seem to promote subjectivity.

A reflexive stance has been taken throughout this study. This involved a continuous process of reflecting on the research being undertaken. It was important for me to do so as I was very close to the experiences many of these participants were coping with, given that I am an international student myself. Reflexivity while conducting the qualitative interviews meant being aware of my own preconceptions, yet not make assumptions. To understand the use of metaphors as a way of expressing emotions amongst international students, it was necessary to put myself in the position of the foreign students being interviewed and reflect on their experiences; at the same time I needed to remain objective. International students may feel isolated when residing within a different cultural setting due to the cultural and linguistic differences. Such students may find the need to express their emotions to describe how they are adapting to a new environment, but sometimes find it difficult to put into words.

Metaphors are a strong element of expressing such emotions. Unfortunately, metaphors may not be well understood by other students due to linguistic and cultural differences. On the other hand, an international student, like myself, is better placed to conduct such research since they understand better the challenges other international students go through. Being able to reflect upon one's own position within the parameters of the study demonstrates reflexivity.

The interdependence between a researcher and the participants can have a positive impact on the success of a study without any distortion of the facts. Cooperative and collaborative learning require members of shared common goals to work together for the benefits of the group as a whole, as well as individually (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The success, therefore, depends on the participation of all the members (Choi, Johnson, & Johnson, 2011). Some international students come from the same background and may be willing to open up to the study. Such students will provide all the facts because they know that the study will directly benefit them, and it was found that many of those being interviewed were very open with the interviewer. Similarly, while international students may belong to different cultural backgrounds, they may belong to a society of international students within the university or even in the foreign country and the support of such groups helped in this research. Such societies are meant to address the challenges foreign learners undergo and they will view such a study as being conducted by one of their own. They will thus be more open with the researcher and eager to help in the study.

An interview is an important research tool since it gives an avenue to further explore the questions, unlike a questionnaire that offers fixed answers (Bryman, 2015). A close relationship or a form of identity with the interviewer can make an interviewee comfortable to explore some questions and offer in-depth data. Since I am an international student and so was the subject, both of us could quickly identify with issues being discussed and in this way that insider knowledge offered an avenue to explore further those questions that both felt carried more weight. While the danger of such a relationship between the participants of an interview can present possible challenges, it presents a better way to identify the questions that are more relevant to the research. The interviewee also feels comfortable discussing a matter when they have the impression that the researcher understands and identifies with the topic.

Researcher bias and subjectivity are inevitable in a qualitative research process (Mehra, 2002). While a researcher may strive to be objective so as to obtain unbiased results, experiences, expectations, and cultural beliefs can influence the research process. The interaction between the researcher and the participants can also lead to research bias. In this study any potential bias was moderated by having an independent evaluator check the metaphors. Interviews are a great way to collect research data, but where there exists an unpremeditated relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, the objectivity of the results may be compromised. By using an international student to conduct interviews with other international students, the research process may exhibit subjective views, although a British researcher may not have the same access to the interviewees. Much depends on the relationship an international or a British researcher is able to forge with the interviewees in order to gain their trust.

The qualitative data obtained from the study was broad and in depth, and challenges were faced in analysing such an extent of data, due to a lack of experience on my part in analysing qualitative data within the restricted time frame. Thematic analysis was implemented for the purpose of analysing these data sets from all interviewees in the form of metaphors, which reflect the experiences of the international students about the subject under investigation. Reflection on this type of analysis was that sometimes it was a struggle to understand and conceptualise how the interviewees wanted to express their message.

The interdependency of the researcher and the participants particularly affects an interview as a way of collecting research data. An interview requires interaction between the researcher

and the interviewee and when the interviewer is also an international student and hence can be a sample of the study, they may exercise subjectivity in the research. Since both the researcher and the participant may be from the same background, the interviewer may quickly grasp the context and question the interviewee more deeply. When such a case happens, the participant may be unwilling to further explore the topic and possibly prevent further questioning. The researcher may also assume knowing the intended reply and may not be patient enough to get the full explanation and quickly proceed to the next set of questions. In the initial interviews, I reflected on my interviewing skills so that I could ensure that I did not make assumptions, and that I questioned areas even though I felt that I already knew the answers. Given the inevitable interaction between the researcher and the subject, it may sometimes be difficult to maintain objectivity.

6.9 Findings of Study III

6.9.1 Interviewee Demographics

Table 6.3 shows the demographics of the interviewees. As can be seen, the majority were males and most were aged between 25 and 34. There were more postgraduate than undergraduate students, which was beneficial to this study because the postgraduates were more likely to have more experience of living in the UK. A large proportion were from the Indian sub-continent, and this represents the proportionate number of students from that region who come to study in the UK (UKCISA, 2016a).

Table 6.2 Demographics of Interviewees

Demographic items	Frequency	Percentage	Demographic items	Frequency	Percentage
Age			Gender		
18-24	8	26.7	Male	17	56.7
25-34	17	56.7	Female	13	43.3
>= 35	5	16.7			
Education			Ethnicity		
Postgraduate	18	69.2	Other white background	4	13.7
Undergraduate	12	30.8	Indian subcontinent	10	33.3
			African	5	16.7
			Far East	2	6.7
			Middle East	9	30

6.9.2 Metaphors used by international students to describe life experiences in the host society

In this study, 30 participants were selected from various UK universities including a variety of educational levels and ethnicities. One third of the sample came from the Indian sub-continent and one third came from the Middle East. The others were from Africa, Far East and some from other backgrounds. Over half were within the 25–34 age range, and the second most frequent age group was 18–24, followed by the remainder, who were all over 35 years old. There were more males than females, with 57% and 43%, respectively. Most of the sample represented undergraduates, with just 30% being postgraduate students.

From the responses of the first study it was possible to see that metaphorical responses could be grouped into the three categories of positive, neutral and negative to reflect the feelings and emotions of the international students. For the main study these same categories were applied but specific themes would be identified through the participant responses.

6.9.3 Attitudes towards Life in the UK

There were three initial questions that respondents were asked. From their responses two different categories relating to attitudes were selected for thematic analysis. The first one is related to positive attitude (acceptance), which is whether the international students accept and easily adjust to a new culture; for example, an indication of an optimistic and integrative approach to coping and a stress-free life shows them using phrases such as “The world is fruitful” and “I want to be optimistic and look forward to a bright future”; they also use words such as “a heart of gold”. The second category is related to a negative attitude. For instance, they may be unable to interact in the new culture successfully and there is passivity, whereby people use phrases such as “I am down and unfortunate” and expressions like “I try to keep on top of things to survive”. Negative support makes international students hesitant and unable to interact in the new culture successfully (they may find it frightening). These categories are supported by Zhou et al. (2008) and Yalim (2007) who found that positive participants were confident and assertive and easily coped in the new culture; whereas negative people were self-blaming, which is a significant indicator of stress and depression. These people find it difficult to cope in the new environment.

The first part of the interview questionnaire provided information on how the participants felt about living in the UK and studying at a UK university. According to their responses to three initial questions, individuals have different thoughts and feelings about living in the UK. International students were divided into two different categories (positive attitude and negative attitude). Overall, 63.3% have a positive attitude towards living in the UK, shown in their responses to the first question on whether they enjoyed living in the UK. This reflects the key link of positive attitude themes (acceptance), that they can adjust easily in the new culture. Sumer (2008) found that international students can adjust without any signs of anxiety or stress. It was also encouraging to note responses such as “people here help each other during difficulties” (P3, P12), “I enjoy mixing with people in England” (P5, P16), “I have lots of friends in this country” (P17), and “I can meet new people” (P24), where the value of social support is highlighted. There may be recognition of the influence of social support in helping with adjustment; yet it is still unclear that many international students accept this, given the results in the previous chapter showing that British students make more use of social support than international students.

It was found that nearly 37% had a more negative attitude. Qualified responses such as “Yes, I like living in the UK, but....” often reflect their fear and anxiety, and could also be considered as negative, thus placing the percentage of those with a more negative attitude even higher. Of the ones who did not enjoy living in the UK, the main complaint was that they missed their families. Yusoff and Chelliah (2010) indicated that family support was found to be helpful in assisting the participants’ mood and motives in following their instincts and accepting the challenges of the new culture and new life situations. It can be said that instinct or reflection should be considered as a useful source to offer support for overseas students to help them make the right decisions at a specific time, and this is always facilitated by being able to discuss with close members of the family.

It was also noted that there was an indication of loneliness: “I sometimes feel lonely” (P11, P22, P26), and this is one of the main predictors of depression; Cacioppo, Hughes, Waite, Hawkley, & Thisted (2006) found that loneliness was associated with more depressive symptoms in their study, and can diminish well-being. Other predictors of depression have been reported by Lin (2006) showing that some Chinese students suffered a lot adjusting to American universities; a list of stressors such as uncertainty, anxiety, language difficulties when trying to speak English and experiencing hardship when being away from their family

were noted. Apart from the separation from family, the other stressors were not reported by the students in this study. The weather in the UK was certainly mentioned on more than one occasion, with respondents stating that “the weather is completely different from my own country” (P23) and “here we have little differences like the weather” (P28). This could be considered as a stressor as the environment has an impact on the way people adapt to their setting and the challenge for international students in adjusting to climate is seen as something they have to endure (Mahmud, Amat, Rahman, & Ishak, 2010).

The most complex and yet visual response was from one student who described his experiences as “very difficult because I see life as spaghetti” (P7). This has implications of life in the UK being described as difficult, because spaghetti conjures up a vision of entanglement (Shinjo, 1986). Yet Murris (2012) argues that strings of spaghetti have ends that are both endings and beginnings, so life in the UK may be a new beginning or may represent the ending of a previous life. That is not to say that it life is not difficult, rather implying that it simply requires adjustment.

The second initial question asked “What is the most difficult experience you have had with this culture?” This was, of course, a more open question and produced a variety of responses. Only 16% gave any positive response, whereas the others were either neutral or negative. This may be due to the phrasing of the question itself, which encouraged participants to consider difficult experiences; the use of the word ‘difficult’ meant that these were more likely to be negative. Some said they experienced culture shock, and others also mentioned the difference in culture. This was further described by one respondent who found that the UK was “a very individualistic society and people with this mentality are a bit different from us, as are from a collectivist society” (P4). Language was also an issue for many, and some felt interaction with the English presented the most difficulty. One participant found that, although there were so many people, she found it a bit lonely. Another was struggling to adapt to looking after himself and one described the new culture as “a bowl of salad”, which may have been a reference to the multicultural society that reflects modern Britain.

One participant stated that there were good things about this culture, such as the appreciation of new ideas and encouraging people to participate in activities. This may be because he has had previous experiences of living in the UK as a child, as he stated that one of his parents had been studying here when he was young. However, it is clear that, despite this

multicultural environment, the majority of the international students found it hard to adapt to the different cultural aspects confronting them in the UK.

The final question in the initial section was “How do you solve your problems in this society?” Only 20% had a positive attitude towards this, with 63% having a neutral attitude and 17% had a negative attitude. It was good to know that some felt they could approach people and speak to someone, either a teacher or friends from their own country. Yet some participants said there was nobody to help and they were trying to cope on their own; it was mentioned that English people did not interact with them. A few found help with problems in seeking religion and praying. One admitted he could not face problems as it felt as though he was “going through a tunnel” (P7). However, others were more optimistic and indicated they would try to work out a plan to approach the problem. It was noted that, although they had not experienced any problems, many students knew where they could find help if needed, stating they would go straight to the university if it concerned academic issues, otherwise to the police or local council. There was also recognition of the place of the internet in modern life and that too was suggested as a source of information on how to deal with problems.

From an overall perspective on attitudes towards enjoying life in the UK, the 63% having a positive attitude indicates that most of the international students are adapting well to the new culture. However, when asked about the difficulty they had experienced with this new culture, the majority had a neutral attitude, closely followed by those with a negative attitude. Few had a positive attitude towards this, perhaps indicating that most international students had been confronted with problems in adapting to the new cultural environment. However, it is the neutral attitude they have towards the social support they receive that shows their experiences in the UK may not always provide the support they need; only 20% had a positive attitude towards solving problems that arose in this society, compared with 63% who had a neutral attitude. The 17% who had a negative attitude may be the ones who are of most concern, as this indicates they do not know where to get support from when they need it.

In the next section of the interview, the participants were given two qualitative inventories that included open-ended questions and uncompleted sentences, which elicited metaphors in their responses, and which provided further information about their emotions and realities that may not have been disclosed in the data from the other surveys and interviews.

6.10 Thematic Analysis

6.10.1 The Themes

The metaphors used in the interview questionnaire reflected the experiences and feelings of the international students around life in the new cultural setting. There were 390 metaphorical words and phrases reflected in the participants' metaphorical answers and it was from these that the metaphorical themes were created and divided into groups. Each group was further divided into two different categories, which were opposites of each other (Figure 6.1). The ten themes selected were height (up/down), closure (open space/closed space), light (bright/dark), movement (moving/motionless), taste (sweet/mixed taste), game (win/lose), condition (intact/broken), pathway (barriers/no barriers), development (growth/stagnation) and feel (smooth/harsh).

6.10.2 The Model

It was also important to have a theoretical framework that could be used to underpin the study and this was designed to take into account the themes that emanated from the participants' responses. Figure 6.1 shows how the model has been designed. The initial part relates to the initial three questions. According to the participants' answers, three different categories (positive attitude, neutral attitude and negative attitude) were identified.

The second part relates to the eight questions and eight uncompleted written sentences that participants were asked to complete. From these the ten different themes and twenty subthemes were created. Every theme was divided into two different categories, for example Height has Up and Down as the two different metaphorical responses. Many of the items on the first level of these subthemes represent positive metaphorical responses, but not all of them do. The second level of subthemes may have neutral or negative metaphorical words or phrases, but there may also be some positive responses as well. The main themes can be categorised depending on the perspectives of the international students; for example, the Chinese have a different time orientation and may refer to the future in the past tense as it cannot be seen (Littlemore et al., 2011). This may mean that they describe the past with different metaphors than other cultures might use.

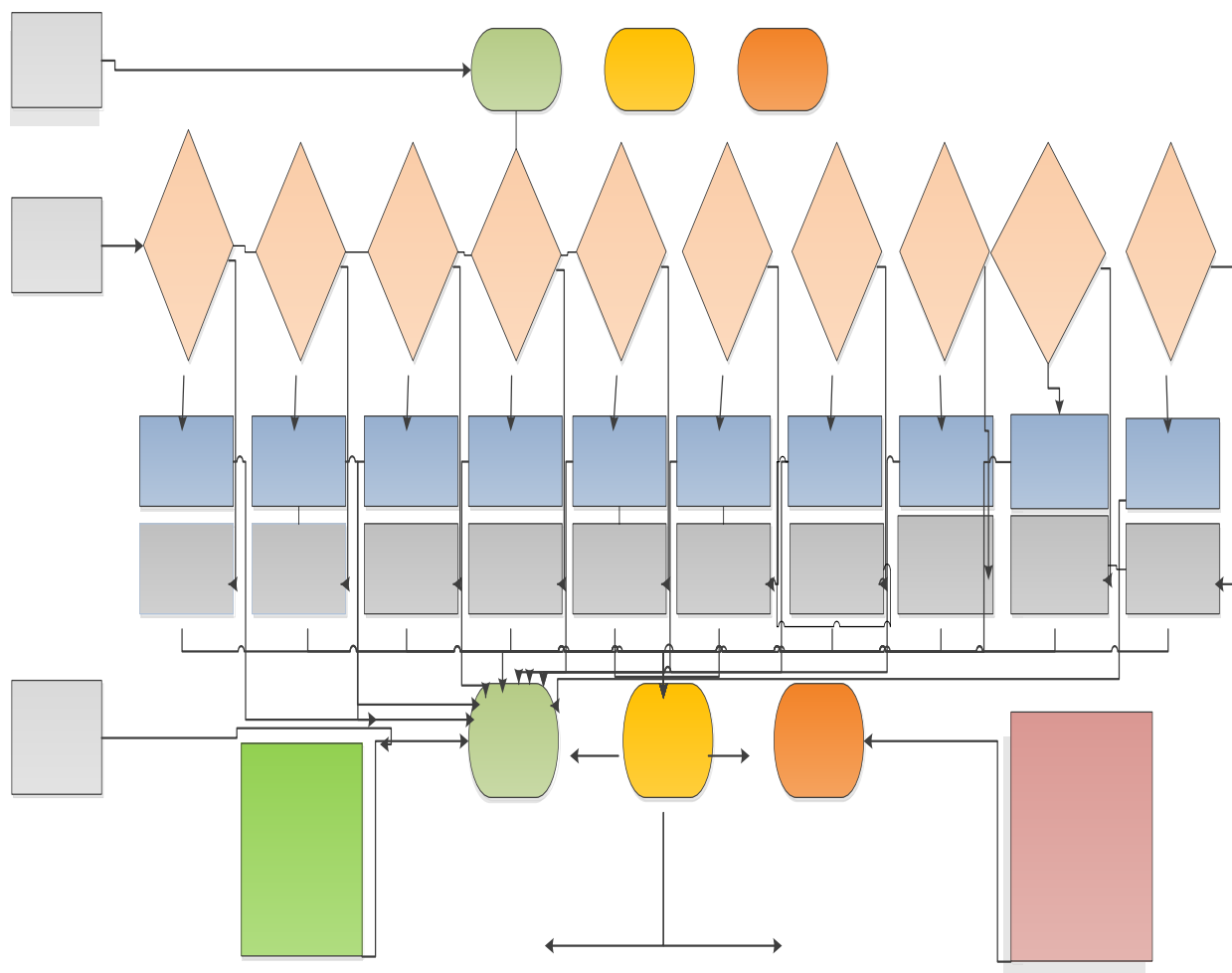


Figure 6.2 Theoretical model of metaphorical themes

This leads to the third part where the ten main themes were initially combined into three attitudinal themes (positive, neutral and negative attitude). The themes are dependent on the context as to which category they fall into; for example, one participant said “today is dark, tomorrow is bright”. This may be using the word “dark” but it is ultimately optimistic, therefore it is placed in the positive attitude. Others used completely negative words or phrases, such as “walking through a dark tunnel”; this showed the participant was facing challenges in living and studying in the UK and his response reflects a negative attitude. He does not mention anything that may show a neutral or positive attitude, such as referring to light at the end of the tunnel. For him it is all dark. These then indicate whether the

international student can face the challenges of life in the UK or not, and whether he or she is receiving support.

6.10.3 The Metaphors

As mentioned, all of the metaphorical themes were analysed according to responses within the context in which they were produced. Table 6.4 shows how these themes were quantified. The first theme was “height”, where 58.5% made reference to “up”. Those referring to “down” made up 41.5% of the participants. The second theme was ‘closure’ and there were 40 frequencies using words associated with this; on a positive note there were 57% who described their feelings using words related to ‘open space’. This indicates that they feel the freedom of being experiencing new forms of culture. Foremost, a percentage of 42% used words associated with ‘closed space’, which may indicate they are feeling lonely and wary about being trapped in the new environment. As can be seen from Table 6.2, the ‘light’ theme also has two different subthemes, which are “bright” and “dark”; 52% had a positive outlook, choosing words or phrases that were linked to “bright”, whereas 47% used phrases or words associated with “dark”. This is an indication that nearly half the respondents may have negative feelings about living in the UK, as the use of words reflecting blackness or darkness is often associated with depressed feelings (Kaviani & Hamed, 2011).

“Moving” and “motionless” are subthemes emanating from the theme of “movement” and 51% used words associated with “moving” that explained their feelings towards studying in UK universities; this showed a positive aspect. However, “motionless” was used by 48% and is an indication that these participants may find the new setting depressing. Even when there may be movement involved, there are barriers in front of them; as 52% alluded to barriers in the metaphors they used, against 47% who mentioned “no barriers” under the “pathway” theme; it is not easy to overcome these barriers to attain the success they need.

Table 6.3 Metaphorical Themes

Metaphorical Theme	Frequency	Percentage	Metaphorical Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Height	41		Game	35	
Up	24	58.5	Win	17	48.57
Down	17	41.5	Lose	18	51.43
Closure	40		Condition	52	
Open space	23	57.5	Intact	25	48.08
Closed space	17	42.5	Broken	27	51.92
Light	42		Pathway	46	
Bright	22	52.38	Barriers	24	52.17
Dark	20	47.62	No barriers	22	47.83
Movement	41		Development	52	
Moving	21	51.22	Growth	32	61.54
Motionless	20	48.78	Stagnation	20	38.46
Taste	15		Feel	26	
Sweet	5	31.25	Smooth	10	38.46
Mixed taste	10	68.75	Harsh	16	61.54

The theme of “taste” has two different sub-themes; “sweet” which was used by 31.25% and “mixed taste” mentioned by 68.75%; enjoyment in food may be taken to show a positive outlook. There are some themes that cause concern; just over half of the respondents chose “losing” under the theme of “game”, with 51% using metaphorical words or phrases linked to this. It is slightly higher than the 48% using “winning”. This may indicate their understanding of what they have achieved or what they have lost in their new environment, or it may reflect their fears about their university studies. However, it does show a feeling of loss associated with negative and unhealthy emotions. Furthermore, a higher percentage of 51.92% chose “broken” rather than “intact” (48.08%) under the theme of “condition” as can be seen in Table 6.4.

Another theme was “development”, which reflected students’ skills development during their study time at UK universities. According to the responses from participants, “growth” has the highest percentage at 61%. This can explain the experience that they, after all, feel that they gain from the university or from the new culture. On the other hand, “stagnation” has a lower percentage than previous subthemes (38.46%), therefore there are more positive feelings

towards development. The last theme is “feel” which has been subdivided into “smooth” and “harsh”. These subthemes were chosen as metaphorical words have been used to describe participants’ emotional feelings. The emotional impact of this struggle is there to see in the 61% who describe their feelings as ‘harsh’; this is where there may be more inner conflict, which has an influence on their psychological wellbeing. Only 38.46% selected words connected with “smooth” where their feelings can lead them to understand more about British culture and they can enjoy studying at a UK university.

6.10.4 The Categories

According to these ten main themes and the participants’ metaphorical responses, the researcher created and classified the main themes into three different categories (Positive, Neutral and Negative). Positive metaphorical wordings use examples such as “I am a tree developing myself to grow some ripe fruit to make my future fruitful”; neutral metaphorical words include examples such as “language barrier” and negative wordings can be seen in examples such as “walking in a dark tunnel”. A positive theme was related to the use of positive metaphorical phrases or wordings because the participants can be easily seen interacting in the new environment. They will be using positive metaphorical wordings, such as “clear image and bright future”. A neutral theme was related to positive or negative metaphorical phrases or wordings, such as “vagueness with a grey picture” and “one eye-sight”. Participants within the neutral themes were found to have two different directions which could lead them to either positive or negative. This depended on how the participants could deal with problems and how they could find a solution. The first direction was positive, seen in the use of phrases such as “key of success”, which can predict a positive outcome. On the other hand, negative metaphorical wordings could predict a negative outcome, seen in a phrase such as “horse pulling back”. Finally, negative themes were related to metaphorical phrases or wordings such as “being blind”. Some examples of how the metaphors were placed in these categories are shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.4 Valence examples of metaphors in three categories

Themes	Metaphorical phrases	Metaphorical phrases
Positive	A tree, as future fruitful	An interesting avenue
Neutral	Steering wheel	Short and sweet
Negative	Losing battery	Shooting blindly

Table 6.6 summarises metaphorical wordings and phrases of the main themes within the current study based on the valence (positive, neutral and negative). The highest percentages and wordings (46%) were found in neutral themes which emphasises that the majority of participants have used neutral metaphorical words and phrases; this indicates that they are in a situation where they are unsure of how they feel about their experiences and could be described as being in limbo. These percentages mean that the international students are facing challenges in studying and living in the UK, and these can lead to either positive or negative outcomes. On the other hand, positive themes were found to have the lowest percentages with just 23% using positive metaphors. However, negative themes play a role in the metaphorical wordings and phrases because 30% used these, which means that the participants found themselves uncomfortable in the UK. In addition, they could be easily withdrawn from universities because they cannot cope with the new culture.

Table 6.5 Frequency of responses in three categories

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	90	23.8
Neutral	180	46.15
Negative	120	30.5

6.11 Interpreting the responses: Discussion

The purpose of using metaphors in this study has been to conceptualise emotions through the use of metaphorical patterns. As described in the previous section, ten themes were identified and these were placed in positive, neutral or negative categories. In this way the results could be compared and contrasted (Stefanowitsch, 2006), particularly between positive and negative, their frequencies can be worked out as shown in Table 6.3. Conceptual metaphors

can be understood by two trajectories: the first is the literal meaning of a word as defined by its context, which probably is not enough to provide an appropriate meaning for the metaphoric phrases that need to be explained. The second way is through connotation, which is the suggestion or implication represented by a word alluding to its social context. This is often utilised in explaining the metaphoric phrase, and the researcher has utilised this method in explaining the metaphoric phrases in this study (King, 2012). Table 6.2 and Table 6.4 give examples of the words and phrases used by respondents in this study.

Most of the themes show that there are various divisions between positive and negative, or an indication that participants may feel fine or depressed, shown by their use of metaphors. These may be indicative of feelings and emotions linked to living in a different environment, but they do show that more than half including negative and neutral ones of all the participants have some issues about living in the UK as international students, although the words or phrases associated with neutral themes still outweigh those associated with negative themes.

Before interpreting the written responses, it is worth mentioning that the manner in which adjustment takes place within a new hosting culture was found to be challenging to some extent, especially for those who were passive in taking decisions and had difficulty in interacting with people. Many researchers indicated in their studies that acculturative stress has a direct influence on international students and can result in confusion, identity anxiety as well as depression (Berry, 1997; Dorozkhin & Mazitova, 2008).

Table 6.6 Examples of words and phrases used by respondents

Metaphorical Theme	Example	Example	Metaphorical Theme	Example	Example
Height	Up Time is flying,	Down Diving in a black sea	Game	Win Manage how to play basketball	Lose Losing the final game,
Closure	Open space open cage	Closed space as birds in a nest.	Condition	Intact I feel energetic acceptance.	Broken Broken leg
Light	Bright shining face	Dark closed eyes	Pathway	Barriers Obstacles	No barriers Well-paved

				which can be experienced	
Movement	Moving	Motionless	Development	Growth A tree, future fruitful	Stagnation Hopeless roots
	Running water.	A person who moves in an empty circle.	Feel	Smooth My family supports me when needed	Harsh Electrical shock
Taste	Sweet Candy life	Mixed taste Sour wishes		.	

“Broken” and “loss” are metaphorical words often associated with feelings of pain and suffering; Eisenberger (2012) suggests that the use of such language is a universal phenomenon, with which people from all around the world may describe their painful emotions. Whilst this may reflect social pain, it can have other consequences, according to Eisenberger, who suggests that there is evidence of social and physical pain sharing the same neurobiological and neural substrates. However, Eisenberger also argues that social pain may be a transitory experience which helps overcome short-term feelings of rejection; it may nevertheless have a considerable impact on the feelings of international student experiences in the UK. The use of ‘broken’ metaphors also gives insight to the way they perceive their world. The changes that have come about through living among people from different cultures have caused fractures in the taken approach they live their life, and they feel as though it is something they must try and fix.

The language related to height is embodied in the use of the words ‘up’ and ‘down’, and in the English language the feelings understood by these words are of being happy or depressed. One interesting response included the mind being up, therefore receptive, yet the eyes being down. This could be interpreted as the eyes not wanting to see the changes, or that what was seen around the respondent made them feel depressed. Life is, however, viewed as being full of ups and downs, like a rollercoaster.

Reviewing the results with respect to the cultural assimilation index measures, this study revealed several crucial findings, associated with culture. These were the ability to speak English, food and habits, and clothing. In the context of the ability to speak the English language, the results show the percentage of international students able to speak English quite well represents about 80.2% of participants; for further details see Chapter five, Section 5.3.1.3. Results obtained from the qualitative interviews demonstrated that a number of international students are capable of providing acceptable and understandable metaphoric phrases. It can be inferred from the qualitative results and the findings of the quantitative results that international students have the ability to express their perspectives about their experiences in the new environment in metaphorical phrases.

There were a number of metaphors relating to movement, and this is not surprising, given the different countries and different cultures being experienced. Many referred to the ocean which is seen as an ever changing tide of moving back and forth. One respondent said that making an effort to live in the UK was like ‘diving into the ocean’, but this may not necessarily be negative, as often diving into an ocean could be explained from two different perspectives; firstly, as a positive explanation whereby they were expressing their enjoyment and satisfaction, when facing challenges in their life. However, the other explanation may be that diving in the ocean is stressful as it needs specific skills to manage it successfully. Another mentioned his life as being ‘a piece of wood that floats on the water and sails according to the waves’. Although this could be taken as life being out of control, it could also be seen as a carefree and relaxed life, which goes with the flow, and therefore fits in.

The support received from others was acknowledged as ‘my husband is a stepping stone’ and shows the value of family in adaption. This was more evidence of the role of water in the responses, as others suggested family were like ‘a running creek’. The use of the word creek shows there is little to be afraid of when the water is there as it is a source of sustenance. There was also use of an image of waterfalls, which may be regarded as something life-affirming, as they have direction and show that there is always a different way of life, even when on another level. As the water cascades, it reaches more serene waters and, although it may present an initial change in its rush over the rocks, there is a time of calm awaiting below.

It was clear that family and friends were very important to the students, encouraging such responses as: ‘My family and friends give me a feeling of warmth, they are like an oasis

always ready and waiting for me.’ Other studies have shown how important emotional support is when moving environments, and McKeon (2014) suggested in her study of Polish migrants to the UK that the emotional impact of migrating to another country was a significant aspect in their psychological wellbeing. The aspirations that migrants have when they come to a new cultural environment are high, and it is easy for these hopes to be dashed, when confronted with challenges outside their control (McKeon, 2014). It is even more difficult to accept that things are not as expected, when there is nobody close by to share those feelings with. Although, family relationships may transcend geographical boundaries (Delgado, 2002; Kolozsvari, 2012), international students may not want to acknowledge to family in another country that their life in the new country is not reaching expectations.

Barriers related to the way being enshrouded in mist or very foggy, so sometimes the respondents could not see where they were going. Others described being caught in a spider’s web, or prevented from going forward by some invisible obstacle. A ‘slightly closed door’ was described as being seen at difficult times, and this shows a negative aspect as the door may well have been slightly open instead. Nonetheless, difficulties opening doors were also noted. On the other hand, others mention freedom and ‘flying openly’, indicating that they view their life in the UK as being released from restrictions they may have found at home. Sumer et al. (2008) found that international students using metaphors such as “flying openly and “directed light” can manage to adjust without anxiety or stress, which may corroborate the suggestion that they find life in the new society an exciting and interesting experience.

Another area which was much stated was related to gardens. Cultivating crops and growing fruit could be seen as development and growth. In addition the fruit could also bring to mind the sweet taste, perhaps of success. Difficulties in life were mentioned as being ‘harmless thorns’, indicating that there are always going to be challenges but they are not going to cause damage. It was reported that 62% consume mixed food (British and traditional food) and 34.4% traditional food only, Mixed food would be familiar foods such as fruit and vegetables, alongside other foods from the new culture. From the metaphoric phrases that were provided in the second phase, the international students raised various aspects of food including natural foods such as fruit and vegetable; they spoke of a sweet taste, representing their experience in the new culture. The researcher attempted to explain all these metaphoric phrases with respect to taste without any bias, in order to converge the views of the international students in terms of the extent to which they had adapted to the new culture.

Journeys were also mentioned on a regular basis. Apart from sailing boats, there were also trains and cars as modes of transport. Some of the issues associated with journeys or travel were also noted: traffic jams; revving accelerators; road maps; slippery paths; rundown batteries; steering wheels; zigzag paths; getting fuel from the petrol station and a broken down car. All of these conjure up images of life being challenging, despite the journey, which may well be a pleasurable experience in itself. The students may value their time at a UK university, but life is not always easy for them.

6.12 Summary

In conclusion, the researcher found the interviews to be invaluable in getting additional personal data from the participants themselves and in reflecting their emotions towards academic and college adaptations as well as social and cultural adjustments. This was because of the use of metaphors which enlightened the feelings and emotions experienced by the international students. It indicates that almost half of those who were interviewed are experiencing a kind of limbo, where they are neither enjoying nor disliking their time in the UK. It seems that they are enduring the situation. Much of this is due to the fact that the home countries and the host countries are different in their culture. International students usually feel discomfort, dislocation, and distress as they miss their families, friends and relatives, but many of the responses showed ambivalence. The use of metaphors helped to uncover the true feelings of international students towards their stay in the UK, as they disclosed that they were facing a number of challenges, despite stating that they were enjoying their sojourn at a UK university. In conclusion, Study III provides an explanation and clarification about the ambiguous results obtained for Study II, and relevant to international students. The next chapter discusses in detail a comparison of the findings from this qualitative approach, along with the results from the quantitative approach.

7 Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Overview

A gap in the subject area was recognised through reviewing literature on acculturation and mental health. Seven research questions were developed following this review of the existing literature:

1. What are the psychosocial variables that can affect mental health for both groups (international and British students) among those studying in the UK?
2. To what extent do gender, having children or not having children, and living with family or not living with family affect international students' mental health, social support, adaptation, coping flexibility, religious problem solving and coping strategies compared to their British students?
3. What is the predictable association between the five independent variable (social support, adaptation, coping flexibility, religious problem solving and coping strategies) and dependent variable mental health in both British and international students?
4. What is the predictable association between the seven independent variable (social support, adaptation, coping flexibility, religious problem solving, coping strategies, cultural stress and acculturation) and dependent variable mental health in international students?
5. To what extent does social support (moderator) affect the association between coping, religion and mental health in both British and international students?
6. To what extent does social support as a moderator affect the association between culture stress, acculturation and mental health in international students only?
7. How can metaphors be used by international students in describing their experiences and challenges in facing issues during their study in the UK?

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the framework of acculturation, which steered this study. The choice of methodology for the study was shaped by the needs of the research and the research questions; this resulted in a quantitative research approach being selected and a survey was conducted with 796 international as well as British students. The main fundamental reason why this survey was examined is due to the association

between mental health and the following seven independent variables: Culture Stress (CS), Coping Strategy (Cope), Sojourner Social Support (SSS), Coping Flexibility (CFS), Religious Problem Solving (RPS), Cultural Assimilation Index (CAI), Socio-Cultural Adaptation Scales (SCAS and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). In order to address the final research question, a qualitative approach was required and 30 international students were interviewed. The interviews elicited metaphors which were used to disclose the deeper emotions of the international students regarding their sojourn in the UK.

7.2 Discussion

Through the use of the quantitative studies and the qualitative study using metaphors, the research questions were addressed and provide more information on the manners of which overseas students cope with life in a different cultural environment. This study has looked at the issues faced by international students and the indications that some of the students may be challenged by mental health problems. The first research question related to gender, having children, and living with family and how these may affect international students' acculturation and mental health. The findings show that males may have more difficulties in adapting than females, which is supported by Halsberger and Brewster's (2007) study where he found expatriate women were generally better adapted than men; and that British students also suffer from mental health issues, perhaps more than international students. The difference may be that the British students know where to find help and are therefore more likely to seek such help than the international students (Cheung, 1984; Suan & Taylor, 1990). However, there was no association established between mental health and gender. Having children does not seem to be moderators as both international and resident students with children were found to have better mental health than those without children. This is in contrast to Nomaguchi and Milkie (2003), who reported better mental wellbeing in childless adults than in parents. Further studies indicate that parenting causes stress and undermines psychological wellbeing (Crouter & Booth, 2004; Kluwer & Jonson, 2007). There may, therefore, be reason to investigate this further and explore whether being a student with children may produce different results from simply being a parent in another role, rather than a student. There was no association found between living with families and mental health.

Upon investigating whether social support influenced adaptation and acculturation in this study, the findings indicate that social support has been effective in helping to make the transition between cultures, and it appears to be accessible for those needing it. British

students tended to make more use of social support than the international students. This may be because they are in situations where they have more networks compared to relative newcomers to the UK. They may also be more aware of groups and be more willing to join in social activities, which may be related to their cultural confidence. Many international students may not be aware of social support that is available (Brunel, 2016), but there is no indication that they are facing problems because of this. In many cases they have friends and family, as was shown in the results, and they value the support given by those close to them.

The third research question was related to coping strategies being used to best effect in dealing with the challenges of adapting. It was found that female international students and British male students used higher levels of coping strategies, but that having children limited the coping styles used. Parents may find that their energies are focused on their children, and they may not have the energies to experiment with different coping strategies, simply using a way that has worked for them previously. Many of the previous studies on parental coping have concentrated on parents coping with children with specific issues (Dzubay, 2011; Han et al., 2009; Lai & Oei, 2014), but few have explored the challenges placed on student parents in stressful situations. However, Salters, Hughes, and O'Leary (2009) found that students who are also parents are more likely to be depressed; this is often related to juggling academic obligations with parental responsibilities, and this may show that such students do not have the time to consider all the strategies that may be open to them in helping them to cope. In other words, they may be too preoccupied with the amount of challenges they are dealing with.

In response to how coping flexibility affects adaptation and acculturation, results indicate that international students with children are in a position where they make more use of coping flexibility, but British students are more experienced in using coping flexibility. Reflecting on how busy parents may not have time to consider using effective coping strategies, this confirms that the international student parents are probably trying to deal with many challenges and have most likely developed the skills they need to cope with stressful events. They may well be using these skills with more limited cognitive processes than the more experienced British students, as they may well be confronted with different challenges in adapting to the new culture.

In addition, the findings indicate that adaptation and coping strategies used in this study may be good predictors for British students but they are not as useful for international students. It may be that different variables need to be used to provide any predictor of mental health among international students. There may be various reasons for this, including the cultural background of the international students. As previous studies have indicated (Bardi & Guerra, 2011; Lee & Mason, 2014), those from Asian backgrounds are different from those from Western backgrounds. It is possible that a new set of variables needs to be developed in order to provide more accurate predictors for mental health in international students. This answers the sixth research question on whether the best predictors of mental health are similar for British and international students, in that the variables for the model used in this study were not appropriate for both British and international students as different constructs are likely to be needed.

In response to the final research question, it was found that more metaphors were likely to be used by students who were depressed. There were a significant number of international students who used metaphors that had negative connotations, and showed that these students were likely to be having difficulties in adapting to their new environment. Whilst it was encouraging to find a number of students who relayed positive metaphors, it cannot be ignored that many still find substantial challenges in adapting. However, indications are that, although international students may be facing difficulties in adapting, they are succeeding in coping with the new environment. This is supported by Davila and Beck (2002) who found that international students functioned positively to both social and cultural adaptation.

Most participants were religious and religious-based coping was used in their new environmental surroundings. This is supported by both Ghassemzadeh et al. (2002) as well as Al-Solaim and Loewenthal (2011) who found a positive relationship between religion-solving problems and types of religion. They argue that religion helps many university students adapt to solve problems in various life situations. The present results indicate strong religious and spiritual beliefs among national and international students. In the metaphors, a number of references were made to religion offering comfort and strength. Additionally, the regression results show that acculturation, coping flexibility, social support and coping strategy significantly contribute to the dependent variable of mental health, yet there appears to be signs of none-significant interlinking points between religious problem solving and mental

health. The significant findings may suggest which coping strategies are associated with better mental health.

It was also surprising to find in the results of this study that males were thus more probable to utilize religion for problem solving than women because, according to Hvidtjorn, Hjelmberg, Skytthe, Christensen, and Hvidt(2014), “Gender differences within religion are well known, and women are generally found to be more religious than men”. Using religion to solve one’s problems can be viewed as a coping strategy. Their study outlined various aspects of religious coping. They noted that whether one uses positive or negative religious coping strategies during crises is dependent on their pre-existing image of God, and the benefits of this coping method are shown to be closely related with the individual’s level of religiousness prior to the crisis (Hvidtjorn, Hjelmberg, Skytthe, Christensen, & Hvidt, 2014). Studies carried out by Bjorck and Thurman (2007) and Kraemer et al. (2009) found that positive religious coping was interlinked with vibrant health and enhanced psychological effectiveness, yet negative religious coping was therefore likely to have negative outcomes.

In a study carried out by Meléndez, Mayordomo, Sancho, and Tomás (2012), differences in coping strategies were assessed with age and gender being the focus. This study identified seven dimensions to coping strategies, which included religion as one of the dimensions. One of the behaviours identified under religion was attending to church as well as praying for the issues to be properly solved or at least addressed. It was found that five coping strategies were affected by gender, and religion was among these, according to Meléndez et al. (2012). The other four were negative self-focus, seeking well needed support, overt emotional expression, and avoidance. It was hypothesised that women would have higher scores in strategies to use when coping, seeking support and being emotion-focused. The results were in support of this hypothesis, and additionally, women scored higher than men in the use of religion as a coping strategy (Meléndez, Mayordomo, Sancho, & Tomás, 2012). A linear trend was noted in the use of religion as a coping strategy by females in relation to age. There was an increased reliance on religion as a coping strategy amongst females as they increased in age, according to Meléndez et al. (2012) the findings in this study showed that female international students made better use of coping flexibility than the males, but it was also contrary to the findings of other studies that men used religion more as a problem solving strategy. It was anticipated that this would be an area where women would predominate. There is, however, the possibility that the participant’s age in this study may have affected

the result. If they had been older females, then perhaps there may have been more dependence on religion from the females, due to the increased reliance on religion as a coping strategy that Melendez et al. found came with age.

According to the results of the mental health variables and the interviews, it can be noted that overseas students seem to cope well in their newly exposed cultural environment, in many cases similar to UK students. However, cultural stress is still considered to be seen as challenging for foreign students. This is because of the local hosting countries being substantially different in their cultures. International students can feel discomforted, dislocated, and distressed as they miss their families, friends and relatives.

This thesis established that there is variance between British and international students in terms of social support. Another prominent result is that there is a difference between international students themselves in terms of acculturation. The surprising result is that the British students have difficulties in coping flexibility and adaptation. The metaphors also provide some insight into the state of mind of international students facing challenges of life within different cultures. The international students acknowledge that life in the UK is full of ups and downs and there may be times when they become depressed, despite the overall feeling of enjoying the new setting. This is shown time and again by use of words such as rollercoaster, ocean tides, foggy paths and closed doors. Such words express emotions that were not seen in the quantitative data, which determines that international students are on the whole happy with their experience.

On the other hand there were affirmations of life at a UK university being an exhilarating experience, and the emotions disclosed in the qualitative data enhanced the quantitative findings. Phrases such as ‘diving into the ocean’ and ‘flying openly’, and even the use of the rollercoaster image as mentioned above, conjure up a sense of fun that does not come across in the results of the survey.

The international male students were shown as being more prone to mental health issues than females, and this may be because it was shown that in general international students do not access social support as much as UK students. In addition, the emotional support that is important for balanced psychological wellbeing is likely to be more accessed by females talking to friends and family; females describe their family and friends as motivating and are not afraid to admit to loneliness or missing their family in the qualitative interviews. They are

possibly more open in regulating their emotional responses on an on-going basis (Gross, 1998; Monteiro, Balogun, & Oratile, 2014). However, their study also showed that female students were more likely to deny there was any problem by adopting a fantasy approach to coping, and this may help them avoid mental health issues in the short-term. The impact of selecting a coping strategy that is fit for the purpose is clearly important. It was noted in the results of the survey that international female students reported higher levels of coping strategy compared to the males, and this was suggested may be because they have more emotional aspects (Burns, 1991). Equally, however, it may be because they are living in a fantasy world where everything is bathed in a more positive light. Throughout the qualitative interviews, words such as ‘dynamic experience’, ‘open horizon’, ‘energetic’, ‘sparkling like diamonds’, ‘treasure chest’, ‘empowering’ and ‘dazzling’ are frequently used; all of these are indicative of positive reactions that may in fact be glossing over the reality of life in the UK.

7.3 Triangulation and integration of results of three studies (I, II, III)

The findings of the quantitative studies (studies I and II) initially showed that there was key fixed correlation visible between mental health issues suffered by international students and gender in each student group individually; however, after interaction results indicated there was a none-significance between mental health and gender for either student group (British and international students). It was there for ascertained that no association has been established between mental health and gender for either British or international students.

There was no association established between students and social support. The explanation for this result can possibly be attributed to the fact that the great majority of universities within the UK provide support services using a variety of approaches. Furthermore, the support tends to be accessible to all students (Wilcox et al., 2005). The quantitative studies (studies I and II) revealed that male students use social support more than female students. This is possibly due to the responsibility male students in particular may have, when they have families needing to be looked after. The qualitative study (Study III) with the international students revealed that both genders admitted they use social support from various organisations to overcome any problem they might face.

It was found that female international students are better than male international students in using coping strategy; however, male UK students tend to use coping strategy more than female UK students, as well as more than male international students. One possible reason for female international students using coping strategy is that females may often be more

concerned about their studies. On the other hand, male UK students may be using coping strategy more than male international students as they have more skills and are familiar with most barriers facing students and how to solve them. However, the result regarding male UK students using coping strategy more than female UK students is not clear, because both of them are likely to have the same skills and experiences to cope with any problems they might be facing. The qualitative study (Study III) found a divergent result since both genders of international study used coping strategy extensively.

International female students use religious aspects to solve their problems more than international male students, but in contrast the UK male students use religion as tool to solve their problems more than the UK female students. Males in both student groups reported a higher dependence, in contrast to the females in both groups, in terms of using religion to solve a problem. International females use religious aspects to solve their problems more than the UK female students, whilst international male students use religious aspects to solve their problems less than the UK male students. In terms of the correlation between using religion to assist in solving problems, an association was established in both genders in both student groups (International and British). The qualitative results show that internationals of both genders support these findings, with some interviewees mentioning metaphoric words and phrases which reflect their thoughts and feelings about solving the issue using a religious aspect, for example, 'Comfort Us by Prayer'. Hence it can be concluded that using religion to solve problems is one predictor factor that may reduce stress in both student groups according to the quantitative study findings, while the qualitative study findings support the result for the international students.

Both sets of international students can adapt to living in the UK. The results of the quantitative study demonstrate that there are gender differences in both genders in both participant groups (international students and British students) and social cultural adaptation. It may be concluded that students living together, whether at university or in various types of accommodation, support each other in terms of accepting their new environment (Bamford, 2008). The qualitative results show that both genders uphold the finding of the quantitative results, with numerous international students providing metaphoric words and phrases which reflect their thoughts and feelings about adapting their abilities to living in the UK; for example, 'today is dark, tomorrow is bright'. It can be concluded that the ability to adapt to living in the UK is a predictor factor which reduces the stress in both students groups

according to the quantitative findings, while the qualitative findings support the result for the international students only.

It was found that both male and female international students tend to use coping flexibility more than the UK students, although male international students tend to use coping flexibility more than female internationals. With respect to the correlation aspect, there is an association between both genders in both participant groups and coping flexibility. One of the explanations for this result is that international students learn from British students that if they have coping flexibility, they can manage more easily in the new environment (Higher Education Policy Institute [HEPI], 2015). Hence it can be concluded that the ability to use coping flexibility in the new culture is a predictor factor in reducing stress, with the qualitative findings adding further support for the international students.

Students with children, whether international or home students, were likely to suffer more from mental health issues than those who do not have children. The explanation for this result is that having children in student families means adding extra family responsibilities, such as caring for their families that requires further expense; this may mean added pressure and financial overburden, which impact negatively on the wellbeing of the student's life. The qualitative results reveal that a number of international students stated metaphoric words and phrases which expressed their thoughts and feelings about having children, for example, 'how can I play two games at the same time?', showing the pressure of juggling commitments. Thus, it can be concluded that having children in student families is a predictor factor for increasing stress in both students groups.

The quantitative results prove that an association was established between social support and both groups of students who have children. These results signify that those who have children probably seek social support, as they have numerous responsibilities, for instance, caring for family, being busy with their studies and financial responsibility (Wentzel, 1991; Crow, 1989). The result from the qualitative study (Study III) emphasises this, for example 'My family is a full engine of support when needed'.

UK students who have children are better at using coping strategy than those international students who go through transitional experiences. In contrast, the foreign students who do not have children are using coping strategy more than the UK students. This result reveals that students who have never married or who do not have children can adapt to their environment

and cope, when confronted by challenging circumstances in their new culture (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). However, those who have children might struggle with their new life, as a consequence of their family responsibilities; therefore, they are eager to find support from any official organisations. In terms of association, the study reveals that there is a relationship between both student groups who have children and coping strategies. In terms of the qualitative findings, the international students tend to use coping strategy extensively to solve their problems in their daily life, using metaphors such as 'going through a traffic jam'. In conclusion, the quantitative findings revealed that the UK students who have children are better at using coping strategy than international students and the qualitative study supports this. There is a similarity between both British and international students who have children and use religious aspects to solve their problems. It is conceivable that religion is the most powerful factor to have an effect on human life; consequently, the family uses religion to explain how life's predicaments can be solved, if they adhere to their religion. Therefore, compliance with these regulations could help people to cope, even when they are confronted by the most challenging of circumstances (Ellison & Levin, 1998). The result from the qualitative study (Study III) found international students who have children tend to use religious aspects to solve issues during their daily life, using such phrases as 'gained power from God to be optimistic'.

In general, this study reveals that there is variance in social-cultural adaptation amongst British students who have children, compared to those who do not and compared to international students. The primary reason for this result is that British students are used to their culture; therefore, they can easily accommodate an unexpected situation, especially with the support of their family. This indicates that they obtain sufficient encouragement and as a result, they are able to adapt to a number of challenging situations (Collis, 1999). It can be assumed that even international students who have children often explore different ways to resolve their problems and adapt to new conditions. The results gathered from the qualitative study (Study III) do support the key findings of Study II since the international students who have children find it difficult to adapt, using words such as 'charged battery to give power'.

The results confirmed that coping flexibility amongst international students is more commonly used for those who have children than those who do not have, which is in contrast to their British counterparts. Furthermore, international students carry a more chance to use coping flexibility than British students. The possible explanation for this result is that

international students face challenges as they attempt to live in their new culture; hence, they may make a greater effort, in an attempt to cope with difficult conditions and adapt to a new culture (Gan & Zhang, 2007). The qualitative findings support the quantitative study as international students who have children tend to use coping flexibility to interact during their daily life, using examples like ‘fuel in petrol station to keep moving’.

In terms of the cultural assimilation index measures, the results obtained from the quantitative study, represented in the descriptive data, revealed that the international students reported that they are capable of speaking and expressing their thoughts and feelings in English, to reflect their experiences in daily life. This claim was supported by the qualitative results which showed the international students had the ability to provide the metaphoric phrases on the topic under discussion.

The findings of the two quantitative studies (Study I and Study II) found that there is an association between international students and British students and coping flexibility with mental health. The findings of these studies aligned with the previous studies conducted in the UK (Summers & Volet, 2008). These findings have been confirmed by Study III, which addressed metaphorical phrases used by international students, such as “Study abroad is similar to driving in traffic jam”. The integration findings from Study I and Study II found that social support was the crucial moderator playing an important role between coping strategies and mental health. This finding was supported by previous studies conducted by Amuyunzu-Nyamongo (2013) and Oyewunmi et al. (2015). In addition, this finding was established by Study III, which addressed metaphorical phrases in international students, such as “My family supported me like a fuel station”.

7.4 Finalisation and visual representation of the final theoretical model

As a result of this mixed-methods study the final theoretical model was a result of the relationship between quantitative and qualitative key findings; this is shown in Figure 7.1. It validates that there was a difficulty for each factor to investigate precisely why mental health could affect either international or British students.

This framework views mental health as the end result of key findings and interactions of many different independent variables in the study. The multiple variables resulting from the two-phase study therefore allowed for the categorisation of either culture shock or the acculturation framework. In addition, this framework shows various long arrows across the

theoretical model, which refer to the interactions between independent variables (IV) at different levels; this results in the level of key importance given to the influencing factors that are visible within the same level, which are referenced by a double-headed arrow between two variables. Furthermore, this theoretical model presents advantageous aspects to recognise and group together intervention strategies, depending on the relevance of the predictor variables, which have an influence on mental health for both international and British students.

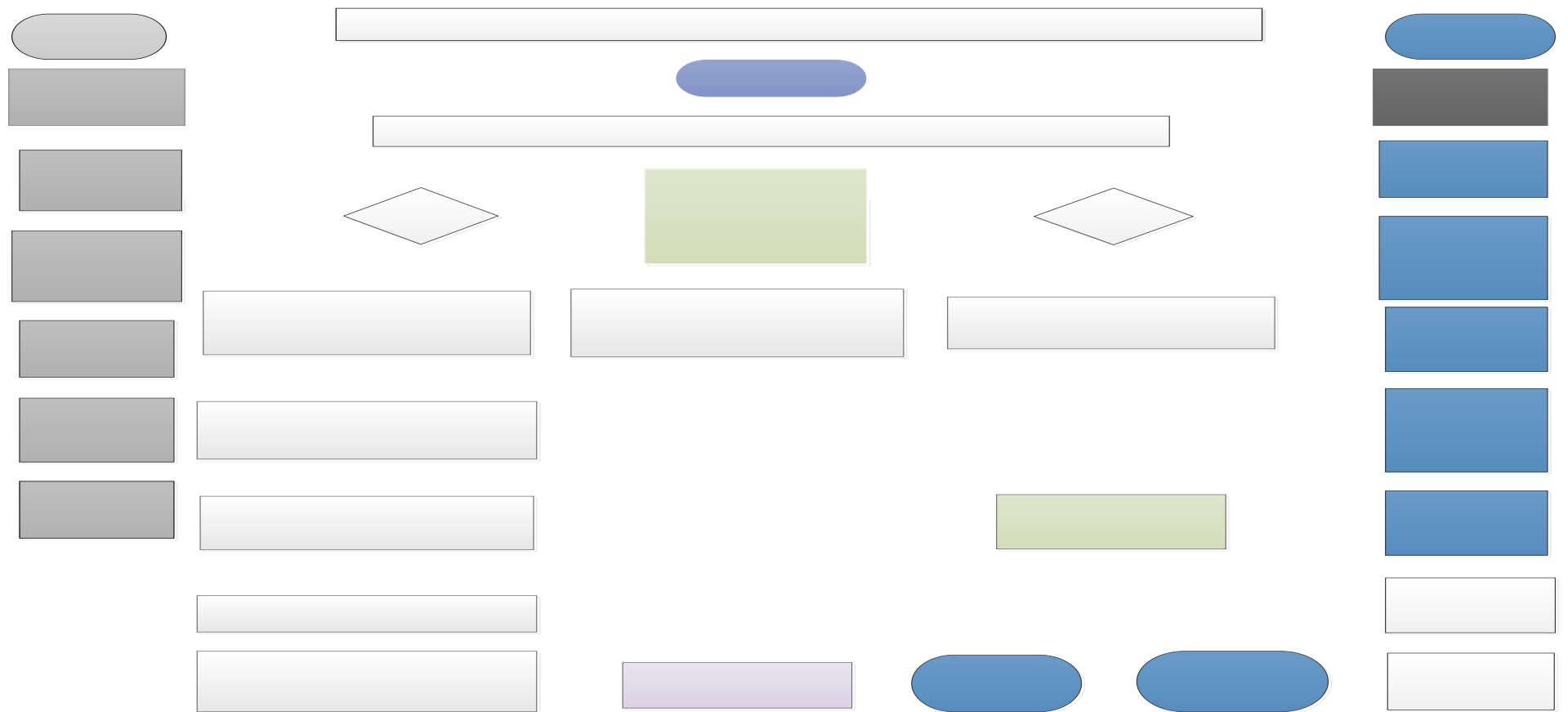


Figure 7.1 Final Theoretical Model for this study

7.5 Key Findings and the theoretical model

Having explained that this study was guided by the theory of culture shock and the acculturation framework, whereby two different phases of this study's research (qualitative and quantitative approaches) were key resulting factors for integration and triangulation. A triangulation approach was used to enhance the interpretation of both the above integrated approaches, to assess whether the qualitative results supported or contradicted the quantitative results. The next steps involved paralleling the key findings and preferably matching each of them to current knowledge about mental health, to produce reasonable conclusions represented in the combined results. This analysis resulted in highlighting the latest factors pertaining to mental health amongst students of both groups. The main results obtained from these two phases were assimilated and triangulated, and were placed in the appropriate level of the acculturation framework model.

The results showed that one of the key findings from the survey demonstrates that there are subtle differences between international students studying in the UK universities compared to the British students. In more detail the findings show that, according to gender, more males than females of both international and British groups reported using religion for solving problems in their life. The results that were placed into specific categories as being a part of the interpersonal or social capacity of acculturation framework model that students who have children have higher mental health than those without children, but a difference is shown in that British students with children have a tendency to use religious-based coping to solve their problems more than the international students. Overall this indicates that British males with children use religion for problem solving, more than international students or British females.

There was, however, a substantial differentiation visible between overseas students and British students as British students tended to use coping flexibility more than the international students. An association was also found between British students living with their family and seeking social support, whereas this was not found in foreign students. It was shown through the metaphors that a lack of social support for international students was evident. However, this also demonstrated a vast number of the international students had a positive outlook and were prepared to make the best of what they had.

Using metaphors has helped to understand the feelings of international students about their experiences in the UK. However, it must be highlighted that not all cultures give the same

emphasis to what Western cultures may see as an up-down orientation (Kaviani & Hamed, 2011; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It may therefore be presumptuous to assume that the downs are always an indication of negative feelings. In addition, much depends on the context in which the metaphor is placed, and many of the responses could be interpreted either way. For example, one female international student reported that “I cannot play two games at the same time”. This may indicate that she is trying to juggle two separate parts of her life without success, and this may be depressing her, so it could be construed as negative. On the other hand, she makes use of the word “game”, so it could also be an indication that living in another culture is an enjoyable experience and that she wants to focus on that while living in the UK; in this case, it would be a positive feeling.

In the twenty-first century, there has been the need for people from vastly unique cultures to interact and live with each other. Many colleges and universities admit international students and have an organisation to help the new students adjust to the newly exposed cultural environment (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Adapting to a new culture or society can be a big challenge. The key finding that comes from this study is that international students are overall adapting well, but there are times when they do need extra support. Although they may not appear to need such support, it should be acknowledged that they are not always faring well on their own. Their use of metaphors indicates that there are many ups and down during their stay, and often they do not have the extra resources available to resident students, such as established networks. Describing the future as a ‘setting sun’ may be an indication of fading dreams, leading to disappointment and potentially impact on mental health; in the same way, viewing the future as a ‘steaming container’ may indicate that an explosion is imminent. It is therefore important that international students are constantly monitored and supported, so that these occasional times of concern when they are feeling low do not become more significant.

7.6 Implications

There are reasonable and justifiable implications to point out from the findings, as they provided more critical thought and insight of the challenges facing international students at UK universities and show that they experience several stressors that can have an unhealthy effect on their lives. In particular their use of metaphors sheds light on their feelings and attitudes and has implications for professionals dealing with international students. Despite most international students giving an appearance of enjoying their sojourn in the UK, the metaphors they use disclose that things are not always easy for them. Professionals should be

more sensitive to the expectations and experiences of international students and thereby provide more support for them in helping them at a time of struggle to best adjust to a new culture. Social support is important for these students as they struggle to adapt to unfamiliar values and traditions, both in their academic pursuits as well as in their daily lives. As Msengi et al. (2015) argue, the emotional support that emanates from such social support can help alleviate and decrease the stressors related to migrating, and can also help produce coping mechanisms. Any negative feelings related to the migration process can be allayed by the sense of value and self-worth that comes from being supported (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2016). With a large number of students indicating that they were positive about their lives in the UK, it shows that a little extra support from the professionals can really make a big difference. The students may say that they are coping well, but the professionals should be aware that this is a different cultural environment for these students and therefore there are always going to be times when they need advice or a friendly person to help them along.

The training programmes (face to face and online) should be processed prior to the students embarking on their study abroad, in all countries that provide scholarships for their citizens as well as students who study abroad depending on their own private funds. These programmes should be established and in cooperation with the ministry handling higher educational in the UK, in order to provide all students who want to study abroad with all the information that may be applicable to them, issues they may face and how they can cope with them. The training programmes should also be provided in different languages that enable the candidates to understand about their future study in the UK properly.

Although small numbers of international students showed that they were having difficulties in adapting to cultural expectations, this should be viewed in terms of its implications for the mental health of these students. Professionals at the university should be trained to become aware of any signs of students not coping, as this may prevent future issues with psychological wellbeing. In particular, professionals should be aware that being with their families may have a moderating effect on stress levels of international families, and they should be trained to detect early signs of depression in single students.

In addition there are sometimes clear divisions in the ways in which males and females react, so that different coping mechanisms may be needed according to gender. It is perhaps simplistic to think that females are more prone to using emotional responses to cope in their new environment, while males mostly did not rely on such emotional aspects, except in some

cases, where they may use emotion-based coping strategies, rather than the problem-based ones that Matud (2004) and Ptacek et al. (1994) found were prevalent in males. Different strategies may be needed for males and females but there should also be an understanding that individuals need support in finding the best coping strategies to suit their individual needs. These needs may vary according to the stressor and the importance the individual places on that stressor at that particular time. This is why support is needed for international students on a continuous basis, as the demands on them are variable, and not always easy to predict.

7.7 Strengths

The first strength of this study lies in triangulation; the findings of three studies adopted in this thesis employed more than one method to understand the phenomenon very well. According to researchers and methodologists, multiple methods and approaches of triangulation exist, such as theory, methodology, environmental and investigator triangulation, which all possess a different purpose and therefore provide the ability to find out what the validation is and combine the differences of potential choices regarding the phenomenon. This research utilised three studies (I, II, and III) to provide triangulation and thus cross-validation for the results obtained for this thesis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013).

One of the strengths of this study was being able to use a mixed methods approach and to validate the results of the quantitative data through triangulation; the metaphors used in the qualitative approach served to corroborate the findings, as well as provide a separate source of data. In particular, it was found in the quantitative results that students were mainly coping well in the UK, but the qualitative interviews found that it was more complex. International students were not always coping well as they sometimes struggled to overcome barriers, seeing closed doors in front of them. Extremera et al. (2006) has argued that international students may not recognise they have mental health problems, as these may be closely linked to emotional responses in being away from their homeland. The metaphors allowed a glimpse of how these students visualise their stay in the UK and, although there are many positive responses, it is clearly shown that there are occasions when their mental health may be affected. The barriers that they encounter, the movements they describe that go up and down or back and forth, can all lead to despair. If these students are not supported on an ongoing basis, then this may affect their mental health and academic performance (Chou et al., 2011).

Using metaphors enables the students to disclose their feelings about their sojourn, without breaking down their own cultural values, where they may not wish to give negative views on the host country (Schwartz, 2004).

Capturing the metaphors was an innovative way of getting more insight into the perceptions of students towards their life in the UK. Without this insight, there would not have been the same depth of understanding about the feelings of these students. The metaphors allowed their attitudes to be described in a way that required no probing, which may have produced some bias, as it is not unknown that interviewees will often say things to please the interviewer. However, the request to describe their experiences through metaphors meant that the students could release their inner feelings without the fear of saying something the interviewer may not agree with. In addition, the qualitative approach helped to bridge the gap, providing content that was missing from the quantitative data. By its nature, a quantitative approach is a reductionist method as it quantifies data and transforms to figures. The qualitative content helped to provide more information about these figures.

7.8 Limitations and Recommendations

The number of scales used in the quantitative part of this study meant that there were many questions for the respondents to answer and this took them on average 45 minutes. This could prove to be off-putting for many and leads to the issue that some may have responded without reading the questions properly. Despite the fact that the researcher attempted to make sure the participants would not become bored during the survey, that in turn could have a negative effect on the responses, offering a conformable atmosphere to avoid such boredom by leaving the questionnaire with some students to complete, and then collecting it from them based on an agreed time and place. It is therefore recommended that the scales be reduced and that only specific ones are used to determine the selected variables. In particular, with the international students some variables have already been well documented in previous studies, and it may be worthwhile selecting these tools, perhaps including all variables used in this study, but formulated in a briefer way. Perceived cultural distance is one of these variations, where some researchers have found it can lower the amount of social engagement with those from the host country (Epstein & Heizler, 2014), whilst others found no association between cultural distance and adjustment Hemmasi & Downes, 2013).

Interviews were conducted with various nationalities, but the students tended to be predominantly Muslim, which may have an implication for the results. The international

students could include other nationalities, such as Chinese, and even European, to put into perspective the views of students towards the role of religion in adaptation. It has been shown that religion still plays a big part in many people's lives and there are positive links between religion and psychological as well as physical wellbeing (Shafranske, 1996a; Seybold & Hill, 2001). This is another variation where there are conflicting views, with Maltby et al. (1999) showing that prayer is a predictor of mental wellbeing, whilst Loewenthal & Lewis (2011) argue that religious practices are not always beneficial. A sample with a wider selection of religions may help to provide more insight on whether all religions, or any specific religion, contributed to finding an effective coping strategy.

The professionals involved with international students should be trained in awareness of the difficulties faced by such students. They should be made aware of signs to look for, which may indicate that students are not coping with the new system. Having guides for students written in their own language, which set out the positive and negative aspects of academic life, as well as daily life in a new culture, could help to alleviate some of the stress felt by students unfamiliar with customs and values. This would enable students to understand that there will always be times when things are going to be difficult, and that others experience similar problems, but it could also direct students with potential problems to a person or place where they could receive appropriate support. It has been acknowledged that social support resources are essential for international students (Boesch & Cimboric, 1994; Harris & Molock, 2000), and even when they may not be perceived as needing such resources, they should nevertheless be readily available.

Regular training sessions should be provided for all international students, giving strategies for coping with the new culture. This should include both academic and daily life, and opportunities given for students to relate their shared experiences. Coping strategies may differ according to cultural preferences and, as was shown in the findings of this study, according to gender. Whereas Sumer (2009) found female students more likely to use positive reappraisal or to seek social support, this study indicated that women international students used higher performances of coping strategies and more coping flexibility. The metaphors revealed that females showed more positivity by their use of upbeat language, but this could have been because they were not facing up to the reality of life and were living in a 'fantasy vacuum' (Monteiro et al., 2014), which protected them from culture stress. It is

recommended that a variety of coping strategies should be suggested to female students, despite their seeming abilities to cope in the new environment.

The critical drawback of this study related to the sampling of the two quantitative studies (Study I and Study II); this study recruited more than double the number of international students compared to British students in these studies. However, the number was not deliberately chosen, but was accidental due to a disinclination on the side of the British students to participate in the research study; there is no ready explanation as to why the British students were reluctant to contribute. This limitation can be clarified in that, if the number of British students had been doubled and therefore in equal numbers to the international students, this may have resulted in different findings, resulting in a difference in the outcomes of this study. Response rates for surveys are given as having an anticipated goal of approximately 60% in order for the results to be reliable and valid, and to enable the results to be generalised; in most cases this requires a multi-mode approach of combining the distribution of survey instruments (Fincham, 2008). In this study, the questionnaires were emailed, which can produce a response rate as low as 20%, according to Fincham (2008), as well as handed out in printed format. However, this does not clarify the reason for more international students participating; it is more than likely that the international groups were more active in recruiting their members.

With regards to limitation of data analysis for the quantitative studies, moderation was used for social support only and there were many other moderating factors which this study disregarded, which might have produced different results. It may also have been beneficial to have a longitudinal study to observe any changes in attitudes over a period of time. One of the main issues with quantitative analysis is that it does not provide answers or possible solutions, as there is no personal interaction; in this study, a questionnaire was used and the respondents worked their way through a number of questions. This may lead to respondents not reading carefully, not reflecting on the question, and simply ticking a box to complete the survey quickly.

The method of qualitative analysis has a possible limitation in that its flexibility defines it to be difficult when recognising in what areas of the data to invest more attention. In addition, the findings are more subjective and cannot be generalised as they are individual perceptions; the findings are not tested for statistical significance (Atieno, 2009). The way forward is completely dependent on the researcher's skills, which means that it lacks a clearly specified

series of procedures. The process is not straightforward for the user in terms of how to identify themes. It is also a time-consuming process, both for the interviewer and the participant, and ultimately for the analysis of a large amount of data, which may not be interpreted accurately (Choy, 2014).

The main limitation related to data collection for all three studies was that data were collected under the researcher's supervision, which might have placed the participants in a situation where their responses could be distorted based on the possibility of being affected by socially desirable aspects, and this may have biased the study's results; having a researcher present at an interview can affect the responses elicited from the participant (Anderson, 2010). In other words, a participant may simply tell the interviewer what they think the interviewer wants to hear.

Another limitation is related to the pilot study, as completing pilot Study I will not guarantee the complete achievement rate of a full-scale survey (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Although this study's findings indicated a number of suggestions and resulted in many lessons learned, the drawback was that the response rates of British students and international students were not calculated separately. However, the study can be used for evidence about the possibilities of mental health issues amongst international students, and create awareness of specific circumstances that may lead to such issues; the study has opened a window on such circumstances and related issues but has not been a comprehensive study. In addition, this study has addressed eight scales in general, but it did not highlight the subscales in detail; for instance, the scale used to measure coping strategy.

The final limitation was that the study found difficulties in comparing and contrasting several outcomes, particularly related to British students, due to a lack of existing literature addressing both mental and psychosocial factors among British students. It would also have been beneficial if British students had participated in a qualitative study, as well as the survey, in order to draw upon more in-depth knowledge of their perceptions.

7.9 Future Research

Regarding the aspects of research, this study has provided some insight into the feelings and thoughts of international students through the use of metaphors. For direction of any future research, the use of metaphors as a way of eliciting information about experiences in a new

cultural environment could be explored. This could be further extended to investigation of other ethnic groups, not necessarily student groups, and conducted in their own native language so that the full extent of their feelings can be explored.

Further research could also be directed towards families and consider the implications of having family members accompanying the international student, when that person was not coping with the challenges of living in a culturally diverse environment. This study focused on the university students, not on the families and the impact that moving to a new country has on all members of that family. Therefore any future study could include all members of a family. This is important to understand as it has been shown that family life, and the social support derived from the family, is essential for the wellbeing of international students. The amount of support and the strategies used by family members in supporting the student deserve further exploration.

Foremost, it is clear to see a specific need for more strong and relevant qualitative research on mental health among international students in the UK and a future study could use a case study approach or take a narrative approach to collect data on the perceptions of Arab students, who are culturally distant from the host nation. It has already been shown in this study that religion plays a big role in the coping strategies of many Muslim students, but there are other areas which could benefit from investigation. Families are extremely important in Arab culture and the support that students receive from their families (Dhami & Sheikh, 2000) has an impact on their lives in the UK. They are also from a collectivist society, where they are more accustomed to group support. The number of Arab students, especially Saudi students, has increased dramatically over the past ten years, due to the availability of scholarships. These students come from a completely different culture and it may be that they face more challenges because of this. A study that explored their experiences in areas of the UK outside the main cities would provide more understanding of such challenges they may have in adapting to a new culture. Personal stories on strategies that were effective in helping to overcome challenges were collected by Khawaja and Stallman (2011) and this could prove beneficial for specific cultures, given that Asian and Western approaches to solving problems may be different. With more research on the lived experiences of international students, there could be more information available for supporting such students.

It is recommended that further studies be carried out on international students, given the increasing numbers seeking international experiences. In particular there is a need for more exploration of the UK experience. One group that has been overlooked is an older age group. This would be a particularly interesting group to investigate as they have more commitments to family and to their own positions in their home country. There may therefore be more stress on them than the younger age group, and indeed they may show more signs leading to poor mental health. In the light of the findings that female international students have higher coping strategies, more research could be conducted on investigating which strategies they used, how effective they were, and whether they were culture-bound. Furthermore, based on the final theoretical model generated for this study, there were many outcomes reflected in the quantitative results, which showed there were significant associations between international students and British students (see Chapter 5, Table 5.16), and the association between international students themselves (Chapter 5, Table 5.18). In addition, the results of the qualitative phase revealed that numerous metaphoric phrases were reflected in the subscales of the main eight tools used in the quantitative study for this mixed methods study. Therefore it is arguable that the outcome of this study opens the field for other researchers, whether in psychological departments or other areas, to follow up on those variables which were ambiguous in this study.

Conclusively, the main aspects of this study has enhanced understandings of international students at UK universities, showing that a number of international students tend to cope well in their new British cultural surroundings. However, through use of metaphors it can be seen that they continue to find their experience challenging. There is therefore no reason to be complacent about the mental health of international students, as it is clear that they still need a lot of support, even though they may give the impression they are coping well. It is consequently important that those responsible for the academic and personal welfare of these students remain vigilant for signs that they need extra support, and are in a position to offer appropriate support when needed.

Having considered this to be a cross-sectional study, despite using concurrent mixed methods, it is suggested that a future researcher can carry out a longitudinal study or cohort study to find rigorous relationships between the outcome variable of mental health with the predictor variables of psychosocial variables.

The metaphors in this study showed that there was an association between numerous metaphoric phrases with sub-variables used in the quantitative studies, namely Study I and Study II. These were where the metaphoric phrases regarding religion mentioned by the participants were consistent with deferring, which is mentioned in religious problem solving. Accordingly, it can be concluded that future studies could be suggested, which attempt to create new scales integrating the metaphoric side with religion or culture or acculturation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial Questions

Initial Questions	Positive attitude	P	Neutral attitude	P	Negativeattitude	P
Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes I do enjoy	P2	Environment and all is quite good	P4	Miss my family	P1
	Yes, I do.	P3			Homesick	P3
	Yes I do enjoy	P5				
What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?	People are very free here	P2	Culture is different	P5	Culture shock	P1
					language problem	P4
How do you solve your problem in this society?	I am adapted	P1	I ask with people	P3	No one to help hear	P2
			I usually go to my mentors	P4		
			consulting my friends	P5		
1- Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes I do	P6			As a spaghetti	P7
	Environment is good	P8				
	Yes I do.	P9				
	Yes of course	P10				
2- What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?			Taking care of myself	P6	Bowl of salad.	P7
					Language barrier.	P8
	Language			P10	People don't interact	P9
3- How do you solve your problem in this society?	By discussing the problem	P6		P8	I am going through a tunnel.	P7
	I try to do some plan for any problem	P10	I contact family	P9		

1- Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes, I do enjoy	P12			I miss my family	P11
	Yes I do	P13				
	Yes, I d	P14				
	Basically I lived here before	P15				
2- What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?	None	P14	Mixing with English people	P11	I was affected with Culture shock	P12
	Good thing about this culture	P15			People don't interact with other	P13
3- How do you solve your problem in this society?			I usually pray most of the time	P12	English people are not interacting	P11
			Talk to my friend.	P13		
			I ask roommates for any problem	P14		
			I can go straight to the university,	P15		
Initial Questions	Positive attitude	P	Neutral attitude	P	Negative attitude	P
Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes I do enjoy	P2	Environment and all is quite good	P4	Miss my family	P1
	Yes, I do.	P3			Homesick	P3
	Yes I do enjoy	P5				
What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?	People are very free here	P2	Culture is different	P5	Culture shock	P1
					language problem	P4
How do you solve your problem in this society?	I am adapted	P1	I ask with people	P3	No one to help hear	P2
			I usually go to my mentors	P4		
			consulting my friends	P5		

4- Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes I do	P6			As a spaghetti	P7
	Environment is good	P8				
	Yes I do.	P9				
	Yes of course	P10				
5- What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?			Taking care of myself	P6	Bowl of salad.	P7
					Language barrier.	P8
			Language	P10	People don't interact	P9
6- How do you solve your problem in this society?	I usually try myself to solve them	P6	By discussing the problem	P8	I am going through a tunnel.	P7
	I try to do some plan for any problem	P10	I contact family	P9		
4- Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes, I do enjoy	P12			I miss my family	P11
	Yes I do	P13				
	Yes, I d	P14				
	Basically I lived here before	P15				
5- What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?	None	P14	Mixing with English people	P11	I was affected with Culture shock	P12
	Good thing about this culture	P15			People don't interact with other	P13
6- How do you solve your problem in this society?			I usually pray most of the time	P12	English people are not interacting	P11
			Talk to my friend.	P13		
			I ask roommates for any problem	P14		

			I can go straight to the university,	P15		
Initial Questions	Positive attitude	P	Neutral attitude	P	Negative attitude	P
Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes I do enjoy	P2	Environment and all is quite good	P4	Miss my family	P1
	Yes, I do.	P3			Homesick	P3
	Yes I do enjoy	P5				
What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?	People are very free here	P2	Culture is different	P5	Culture shock	P1
					language problem	P4
How do you solve your problem in this society?	I am adapted	P1	I ask with people	P3	No one to help hear	P2
			I usually go to my mentors	P4		
			consulting my friends	P5		
7- Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes I do	P6			As a spaghetti	P7
	Environment is good	P8				
	Yes I do.	P9				
	Yes of course	P10				
8- What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?			Taking care of myself	P6	Bowl of salad.	P7
					Language barrier.	P8
			Language	P10	People don't interact	P9
9- How do you solve your problem in this society?	I usually try myself to solve them	P6	By discussing the problem	P8	I am going through a tunnel.	P7
	I try to do some plan for any problem	P10	I contact family	P9		

7- Do you enjoy living in the host society?	Yes, I do enjoy	P12			I miss my family	P11
	Yes I do	P13				
	Yes, I d	P14				
	Basically I lived here before	P15				
8- What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?	None	P14	Mixing with English people	P11	I was affected with Culture shock	P12
	Good thing about this culture	P15			People don't interact with other	P13
Initial Questions			I usually pray most of the time	P12	English people are not interacting	P11
1- Do you enjoy living in the host society?			Talk to my friend.	P13		
			I ask roommates for any problem	P14		
			I can go straight to the university,	P15		

Appendix 2: Themes and categories

Height

Q/S	Up	P	Q/S	Down	P
Q8- We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Time is flying, Can't avoid difficulties in this earth so we just need to get prepared and try to get on with these difficulties and go on.	P24	Q1- What does the world look like to you?	Diving in a black sea	P25
S6- Failure is like.....	Climbing up to a mountain	P25	Q2- When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?	Down of earth	P30
S3- Relationship with other people is like	Pillars as they will give a hand one day.	P26			
S6- Failure is like.....	A good step to climb further for better step. Failures are stepping stones to the bright future.	P2			

Closure

Q/S	Open space	P	Q/S	Close space	P
Q8- We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Usually looking for open cage to run away from the stress.	P4	Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	My family is attached like me, very dependable as birds in a nest. On the other hand, my friends look soft and clear.	

P1	Open door	P9	Q1- What does the world look like to you?	World is like small ten to do everything garden and arrange everything beautiful.	P10
S4- I see myself as someone who....	Open book and open minded.	P21	S2- For me, future is like.....	Small garden	P10
Q2- When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?	A cave	P9	S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	traffic jam	P16
Q8- We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Held dreams	P9	Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Between rock and a hard place	P29
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like	Open door	P9	S1- My life is like....	Difficult Opening door	P27
			Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Between rock and a hard place	P29

Light

Q/S	Brightens	P	Q/S	Darkness	P
Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	The people inner shining face always makes me happy	P4	S7- Other people think I am like.....	I can't see everything's through closed eyes	P1
Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	Yes as a directing light .	P5	Q7- When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?	Living in my own shadow	P2
S1- My life is like....	A piece of clear ice	P8	Q8 We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Shadow path with dark ness .	P7

S4- I see myself as someone who....	clear picture	P8	S2- For me, future is like.....	Shooting blindly	P7
Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	shiny	P11	Q7- When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?	I probably feel bad with damaged star.	P13
S7- Other people think I am like.....	A diamond	P14	S1- My life is like....	taken trapped in the shadow	P19
S2- For me, future is like.....	Bright sun	P17	Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	Today is dark tomorrow is bright	P14
Q4- How does the future look like?	Looks bright	P22	S5- To me, life difficulties are like....	It seems Dust that I can't see clearly.	P14
Q4- How does the future look like?	Future is Bright and shining.	P24	Q4- How does the future look like?	Vogue can't see clear.	P25
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Adding Stars	P24	Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	Today is dark tomorrow is bright	P14
Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	Sparkling like diamonds	P25	Q4- How does the future look like?	Unpredicted as vague as water melon.	P7
S7- Other people think I am like.....	Gold coins	P25	S2- For me, future is like.....	Foggy tracks	P1
Q4- How does the future look like?	Future can be bright. It is flourishing.	P2	S2- For me, future is like.....	Train shadow	P4

Movement

Q/S	Moving	P	Q/S	Motionless	P
Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	My family supports me when needed as working engine.	P30	S7- Other people think I am like.....	A person who moves in an empty circle.	P7
S3- Relationship with other people is like.....	Attached as running water.	P15	S6- Failure is like.....	Seeing with my heart that I hope to achieve my goal.	P23

S7- Other people think I am like.....		P15	Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	As an ax in a tree	P2
S7- Other people think I am like.....	Sailing boat going smoothly.	P27			
Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	I see myself like Wave in the ocean and windy.	P18	S1- My life is like....	Very exciting and exposed to global environment in sailing clods.	P12
S4- I see myself as someone who...	Confident as bird Flying openly.	P9	S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Unpowered engine which has shopped.	P9
S7- Other people think I am like.....	Flying bird I can fly everywhere.	P27	S5- To me, life difficulties are like	A flat battery not help me to move.	P21
S5- To me, life difficulties are like	Difficulties are always there in our roads, we have to drive smartly to get through. If there are no difficulties, we don't pray to the GOD	P2	Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	energy boosters,	P3
Q2- When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?	Dolphin lives in the water and always in the group.	P26	Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Fuel in petrol station to help moving.	P28
Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	An engine always ready to move.	P4	Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	Charged battery to give a power.	P19
S4- I see myself as someone who....	As driving in unparalleled highway	P7	S4- I see myself as someone who....	A gained power to be optimistic.	P12
Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	My family and friends are fuel my life engine to keep going.	P8	Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	A tonic injection to be able keep going..	P4
Q2- When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?	Going on well directed wheels	P15	Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Running flood.	P16

S3- Relationship with other people is like	Movable station	P5			
S6- Failure is like.....	Continued trials	P5			
Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	Steering wheel that I use it to drives me to find a solution.	P23			
Q8 We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Taking fuel from the station	P28			
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Life train journey	P10			
Q2- When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?	a coal train moving slowly.	P21			
Q1- What does the world look like to you?	World is beautiful, and life is considered as optimal waterfall one, I want to be optimistic for good future.	P5			

Game

Q/S	Success	P	Q/S	Failure	P
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like	A fitness gym. It gives me strength to achieve my aim.	P23	Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	I have an image like a horse that always pulls back.	P7
S6- Failure is like.....	dazzling quizzes	P22	S7- Other people think I am like.....	Struggling race	P7
S6- Failure is like.....	A key to success	P8	Q7- When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?	Losing the final game, so I prepare to get back.	P24
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like	A completion to achieve my mission	P8	S6- Failure is like.....	Failing test and quizzes.	P11

Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	Mange how to Play basketball	P26	Q7- When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?	Fail button.	P5
Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	Playing tennis it might be winning.	P28	Q7- When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?	Success and failure is part of the game.	P16
Q5- At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?	As coach watching game expecting to win.	P20	Q7- When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?	Losing the final game	P24
			S5- To me, life difficulties are like	You may lose or win.	P15

Condition

Q/S	Intact	P	Q/S	Broken	P
Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	I feel energetic acceptance.	P1	S6- Failure is like.....	Broken leg	P27
S3- Relationship with other people is like	Fitness and losing weight of stress	P22	S2- For me, future is like.....	Harsh rain can be good or bad.	P15
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Fitness gym	P23	Q7- When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?	As broken hand that can't carry the stuff.	P28
S4- I see myself as someone who	Is capable enough of succeeding in this competitive world in catching future.	P3	S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like	A filling a broken jar	P7
S1- My life is like....	Succeeding in the competitive world.	P4			
			S7- Other people think I am like.....	broken fragile glass.	P22
			S6- Failure is like.....	As bird with broken wings	P7
			Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	No simile as far in this host society but I can say it is not easy to be away which chopped my future.	P3

Pathway

Q/S	No barriers	P	Q/S	Barriers	P
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Life train journey	P10	S5- To me, life difficulties are like....	Obstacles which can be experienced and passed.	P3
Q2- When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?	Well-paved	P11	Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	Going via road; today is dark and tomorrow bright.	P14
Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	UK is Straight forward	P13			
Q4- How does the future look like?	Grass platform every things going fine.	P15	S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Going through a traffic jam	P16
S1- My life is like....	An interesting avenue.	P16	S5- To me, life difficulties are like....	Street humps	P22
Q4- How does the future look like?	Well-balanced get way	P17	Q8- We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Feeling street humps	P8
S2- For me, future is like.....	Flourishing path.	P20	S7- Other people think I am like.....	Slipping muddy path	P20
S6- Failure is like.....	Using a road to fallow my plan that I made it be.	P20	Q4- How does the future look like?	Unstable station	P23
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	On train complete my life journey	P18	Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	A shoe cast adrift	P6
S4- I see myself as someone who	Walking a long through paved platform.	P1	S1- My life is like....	Rollercoaster	P6

Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Furnish avenues	P22			
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Development

Q/S	Growth	P	Q/S	Stagnation	P
			S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Hopeless roots	P14
Q4- How does the future look like?	Future is very fruitful.	P3	S6- Failure is like.....	Unseasoned plants	P18
S2- For me, future is like.....	I am a tree developing myself to grow some ripen fruit to make my future fruitful	P3	S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Uncultivated feeling.	P20
S3- Relationship with other people is like.....	Devoting myself as garden throughout our life..	P3	S7- Other people think I am like.....	Undirected sunflower	P21
S8- Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....	Making effort in work and education with cultivated crops.	P3	S3- Relationship with other people is like.....	A dry stem can be broken anytime.	P27
S2- For me, future is like.....	Fresh fruit	P9			
S7- Other people think I am like.....	White flower	P10			
Q4- How does the future look like?	Future is fruitful	P12			
S2- For me, future is like.....	A tree, future fruitful	P12			
S7- Other people think I am like.....	cultivated garden	P13			
S1- My life is like....	A lotus flower	P14			
Q1- What does the world look like to you?	World looks very nice plant to be.	P15			
S2- For me, future is like.....	Cultivation	P16			
S4- I see myself as someone who	Sugar cane	P18			
S7- Other people think I am like.....	Green filed to helping people.	P19			

Q6- Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?	Springs Flowers	P21			
S2- For me, future is like.....	Green grains	P21			
S1- My life is like....	Flower that means promising.	P24			
Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Supportive as farm has different plants.	P25			
Q2- When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?	planting hopes	P20			
Q8-8.We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Cheerful tree that due the effort I will get the fruit.	P29			
S3- Relationship with other people is like.....	nice Flowers	P18			
Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Advisable tree	P9			

Taste

Q/S	Sweet	P	Q/S	Mixed taste	P
S1- My life is like....	Sweet corn	P5	S6- Failure is like.....	Different flavour from tome to time.	P24
S3- Relationship with other people is like.....	Candy life	P13	S1- My life is like....	Sore wishes	P22
S4- I see myself as someone who	Candy life	P15	S1- My life is like....	Sore and sweet	P11

Other

Q/S	Smooth	P	Q/S	Harsh	P
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Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Running creek all the time.	P2	S5- To me, life difficulties are like....	Harmless thorn	
Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	My family supports me when needed as full engine.	P30	S6- Failure is like.....	Electrical shock	P4
S5- To me, life difficulties are like	Circle	P26	Q8- We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Motives can easily let me down	P29
S1- My life is like....	Lovely and happy bird	P15			P21
Q3- How does your family and friends look like?	Energy boosters, they always support me in my endeavours.	P12			
S7- Other people think I am like.....	A person with confident smile.	P12			
Q8- We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?	Destiny of a port	P14			
S3- Relationship with other people is like	Stable wood piece which flows on water goes and sails according to the waves.	P28			

Appendix 3: Main Themes

Positive	Q/S	P	Neutral	Q/S	P	Negative	Q/S	P
Small garden	Q1	P18	Rollercoaster	S1	P2	Slippery ladder	Q7	P22
Sugar cane	S4	P18	slippery ground	Q5	P17	Hopeless roots	S8	P14
A tree, as future fruitful	S2	P12	slippery path	Q5	P21	Sore wishes	S1	P22
Fruitful	Q4	P3	Sore and sweet	S1	P11	Broken leg	S6	P27
Candy life	S3	P13	Traffic jam	S8	P16	Broken hand	Q7	P28
Well-paved	Q2	P11	Charging battery	S6	P21	Harmless thorn	S5	P4
An interested avenue	S1	P16	Wheel-steering	Q5	P23	Unstable station	Q4	P23
Energetic	Q6	P1	Spoon feeding	S5	P9	Losing battery	S5	P21
Well directed wheels	Q2	P15	A key to success	S6	P8	Horse pulls back	Q6	P7
Running water	S3	P15	Foggy tracks	S2	P1	Closed eyes	S7	P1
Lovely bird	S1	P15	Sparkling avenue	S1	P3	Walking in a dark tunnel	Q8	P7
Flying openly	S4	P9	Can be bright	Q4	P2	Shooting blindly	S2	P7
Directed light	Q6	P5	As water melon	Q3	P7	Unseen cave	Q2	P9
Drive smartly	S5	P2	One eye-sight	S3	P7	Between rock and a hard place	E3	P29
			Light in the sea darkness	Q2	P12	Harsh rain	S2	P15
			Today is dark tomorrow is bright	Q5	P14	Running flood	Q3	P16
			Vogue	Q4	P25	As bird with broken wings	S6	P7

			Sailing in the waves	S1	P2	Down earth	Q2	P30
			Climbing Up to mountain hopefully I achieved	S6	P25	Diving in a sea	Q1	P25
			Strike people up and down	S3	P20			
			Taking fuel from the station	Q3	P23			

Appendix 4: Reliability Scales

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) reliability scale for each item

Number of items	Pearson	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1. Been feeling perfectly well and in good health?	.60**	.727	.566
2. Been feeling in need of a good tonic?	.70**	.728	.690
3. Been feeling run down and out of sorts?	.73**	.727	.722
4. Felt that you are ill?	.78**	.726	.773
5. Been getting any pains in your head?	.42**	.731	.393
6. Been getting a feeling of tightness or pressure in your head?	.52**	.729	.491
7. Been having hot or cold spells?	.48**	.728	.441
8. Lost much sleep over worry?	.58**	.728	.557
9. Had difficulty in staying asleep once you are off?	.56**	.728	.535
10. Felt constantly under strain?	.61**	.728	.601
11. Been getting edgy and bad-tempered?	.73**	.728	.723
12. Been getting scared or panicky for no good reason?	.67**	.724	.641
13. Found everything getting on top of you?	.34**	.732	.317
14. Been feeling nervous or strung-up all the time?	.56**	.728	.531
15. Been managing to keep yourself busy and occupied?	.53**	.728	.504
16. Been taking longer over the things you do?	.49**	.729	.470
17. Felt on the whole you were doing things well?	.41**	.731	.379
18. Been satisfied with the way you've carried out your tasks?	.62**	.729	.605
19. Felt you are playing a useful part in things?	.52**	.728	.503
20. Felt capable of making decisions about things?	.49**	.728	.465
21. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	.45**	.729	.435
22. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	.70**	.727	.683
23. Felt that life is entirely hopeless?	.62**	.727	.593
24. Felt that life isn't worth living?	.74**	.726	.730
25. Though of the possibility that you might make away with yourself?	.54**	.728	.521
26. Found at times you couldn't do anything because your nerves were too bad?	.42**	.729	.366
27. Found yourself wishing you were dead and away from it all?	.47**	.730	.420
28. Found that the idea of taking your own life kept coming into your mind?	.24**	.734	.193

Culture Stress (CS) Reliability scale for each item

Number of items	Person	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1- I miss the familiar way of life in my own country.	.36**	.751	.286
2- It's hard being away from the people I love.	.61**	.730	.535
3- It is lonely for me here in the UK.	.71**	.718	.654
4- I feel less important here than at home.	.72**	.717	.662
5- People treat me differently because of my cultural background.	.72**	.718	.658
6- I feel uncomfortable in the UK culture.	.74**	.717	.684
7- I don't feel safe here in the UK.	.67**	.723	.610
8- I feel I really belong here at the university.	.40**	.748	.309

Brief Cope (Cope) Reliability scale for each item

Number of items	Person	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1- I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.	.43**	.739	.447
2- I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.	.32**	.743	.292
3- I've been saying to myself "this isn't real".	.50**	.739	.475
4- I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.	.48**	.739	.459
5- I've been getting emotional support from others.	.52**	.739	.495
6- I've been giving up trying to deal with it.	.52**	.738	.493
7- I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.	.43**	.740	.406
8- I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.	.517**	.739	.493
9- I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.	.57**	.738	.545
10- I've been getting help and advice from other people.	.56**	.738	.539
11- I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.	.53**	.738	.507
12- I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	.57**	.737	.546
13- I've been criticizing myself.	.62**	.736	.596
14- I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.	.59**	.737	.562
15- I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.	.64**	.736	.620
16- I've been giving up the attempt to cope.	.60**	.737	.577
17- I've been looking for something good in what is happening.	.61**	.737	.585
18- I've been making jokes about it.	.566**	.737	.543
19- I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.	.63**	.736	.604
20- I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.	.60**	.737	.850

21- I've been expressing my negative feelings.	.64**	.736	.617
22- I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.	.56**	.737	.530
23- I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.	.62**	.737	.601
24- I've been learning to live with it.	.59**	.737	.573
25- I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.	.53**	.738	.510
26- I've been blaming myself for things that happened.	.55**	.738	.528
27- I've been praying or meditating.	.51**	.738	.484
28- I've been making fun of the situation.	.56**	.737	.540

Religious Problem Solving (RPS) Reliability scale for each item

Number of items	Person	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1- When thinking about a difficulty, I try to come up with possible solutions without God's help.	.23**	.744	.231
2- When faced with trouble, I deal with my feelings without God's help.	.24**	.746	.192
3- When deciding on a solution, I make a choice independent of God's input.	.39**	.741	.351
4- When I have difficulty, I decide what it means by myself without help from God.	.24**	.746	.190
5- After I've gone through a rough time, I try to make sense of it without relying on God.	.30**	.744	.251
6- I act to solve my problems without God's help.	.22**	.746	.173
7- When a troublesome issue arises, I leave it up to God to decide what it means for me.	.63**	.732	.602
8- In carrying solution my problems, I wait for God to make the best choice for me.	.71**	.730	.681
9- I do not think about different solution because God provides them for me.	.78**	.728	.757
10- Rather than trying to come up with the right solution to a problem myself, I let God decide how to deal with it.	.75**	.729	.729
11- I don't spend much time thinking about troubles I've had; God makes sense of them for me.	.69**	.731	.662
12- When a situation makes me anxious; I wait for God to take those feelings away.	.68**	.732	.652
13- When considering a difficult situation, God and I work together to think of possible solutions.	.72**	.729	.699
14- When I have a problem, I talk to God about it and together we decide what it means.	.74**	.729	.723
15- After solving a problem. I work with God to make sense of it for me.	.76**	.728	.742
16- Together, God and I put my plans into action.	.75**	.729	.732
17- When I feel nervous and anxious about a problem, I work together with God to find a way to relieve my worries.	.72**	.730	.701
18- When it comes to deciding how to solve a problem. God and I work together as a partners.	.71**	.730	.685

Sociocultural adaptation scales (SCAS) Reliability scale for each item

Number of items	Person	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1- Making friends.	.66**	.756	.638
2- Using the transport system.	.71**	.755	.692
3- Making yourself understood.	.76**	.754	.746
4- Getting used to the pace of life.	.78**	.754	.786
5- Going shopping.	.77**	.753	.758
6- Talking about yourself with others.	.78**	.753	.761
7- Understanding jokes and humour.	.77**	.753	.756
8- Following rules and regulations.	.79**	.753	.771
9- Dealing with the bureaucracy (administration).	.79**	.753	.770
10- Finding your way around.	.81**	.752	.795
11- Dealing with people staring at you.	.77**	.753	.757
12- Going to coffee shops/restaurants.	.78**	.753	.762
13- Understanding the local language.	.75**	.753	.728
14- Living away from family members overseas.	.55**	.757	.525
15- Dealing with people of higher status.	.81**	.752	.792
16- Understanding what is required from you at university.	.82**	.752	.812
17- Coping with academic work.	.78**	.753	.760
18- Expressing your ideas in class.	.78**	.752	.763

Coping flexibility (CFS) Reliability scale for each item

Number of items	Person	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1- When a stressful situation has not improved, I try to think of other ways to cope with it.	.64**	.729	.593
2- I only use certain ways to cope with stress.	.29**	.751	.204
3- When stressed, I use several ways to cope and make the Situation better.	.67**	.727	.631
4- When I haven't coped with a stressful situation well, I use other ways to cope with that situation.	.68**	.727	.637
5- If a stressful situation has not improved, I use other ways to cope with that situation.	.73**	.722	.683
6- I am aware of how successful or unsuccessful my attempts to cope with stress have been.	.63**	.728	.575
7- I fail to notice when I have been unable to cope with stress.	.33**	.748	.236
8- If I feel that I have failed to cope with stress, I change the way in which I deal with stress.	.73**	.721	.688
9- After coping with stress, I think about how well my ways of coping with stress worked or did not work.	.73**	.720	.687
10- If I have failed to cope with stress, I think of other ways to cope.	.74**	.719	.701

Sojourner Social Support (SSS) Reliability scale for each item.

Number of items	Person	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1- Listen and talk with you whenever you feel lonely or depressed.	.63**	.757	.607
2- Give you tangible assistance in dealing with any communication or language problems that you might face.	.62**	.757	.599
3- Explain things to make your situation clearer and easier to understand.	.64**	.756	.622
4- Spend some quiet time with you whenever you do not feel like going out.	.73**	.752	.715
5- Explain and help you understand the local culture and language.	.70**	.753	.682
6- Accompany you somewhere even if he/she doesn't have to.	.75**	.753	.731
7- Share your good times and bad times.	.81**	.751	.794
8- Help you deal with some local institutions' official rules and regulations.	.72**	.754	.697
9- Accompany you to do things whenever you need someone for company.	.81**	.751	.795
10- Provide necessary information to help orient you to your new surroundings.	.77**	.752	.753
11- Comfort you when you feel homesick.	.80**	.750	.789
12- Help you interpret things that you don't really understand.	.42**	.752	.755
13- Tell you what can and cannot be done in England.	.37**	.754	.671
14- Visit you to see how you are doing.	.45**	.749	.806
15- Tell you about available choices and options.	.41**	.751	.798
16- Spend time chatting with you whenever you are bored.	.49**	.750	.770
17- Reassure you that you are loved, supported and cared for.	.43**	.751	.777
18- Show you how to do something that you didn't know how to do.	.42**	.752	.730

Cultural Assimilation Index (CAI) Reliability for each item

Number of items	Person	Cronbach's Alpha if items Deleted	Corrected Items- Total correlation
1- What kind of food do you usually eat at home?	.19**	.570	.107
2- Do you ever eat out?	.21**	.668	.139
3- Are forbidden foods avoided?	.56**	.630	.450
4- Traditional dress worn.	.31**	.663	.188
5- Do you drink alcohol when you are out?	.58**	.630	.489
6- Do you drink alcohol at home?	.56**	.636	.476
7- How do you rate your English speaking ability?	.30**	.662	.210
8- What language do you use at home with the family?	.35**	.658	.246
9- How do you rate your reading of English?	.33**	.661	.209
10- Do you read English newspapers?	.44**	.650	.370

11- Extent of TV viewing?	.55**	.632	.439
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Table reliability for all scales

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
General Health Questionnaire	28	.737	.926
Culture Stress	8	.752	.837
Brief Cope	28	.746	.924
Religious Problem Solving	18	.747	.899
Sociocultural adaptation scales	18	.766	.962
Coping flexibility	10	.750	.865
Sojourner social support	18	.765	.959
Cultural assimilation index	11	.667	.644

Appendix 5: Questionnaire



For international and British students

Title of the study

A study on mental health and psychosocial variables among international students in the United Kingdom compared to resident students

Researcher: Khaled Saeed Alsaad

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of international students studying in UK universities compared to resident students. In present study, you will be asked to fill in a series of questionnaires.

Confidentiality: Your participation in this research will remain confidential, and your identity will not be stored alongside your data. Your responses will be assigned a pseudonym, and the list connecting your real name with the chosen pseudonym will be destroyed once all the data is collected and analysed.

Your right:

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to join or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Contact:

If you have any further questions about this study, please contact the researchers: Khaled Alsaad (researcher) (khaled.alsaad@beds.ac.uk), Dr Hossein Kaviani (Supervisor) (hossein.kaviani@beds.ac.uk) & Dr Andrew Clements (second supervisor) (Andrew.Clements@beds.ac.uk), Department of Psychology, Park Square Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 3JU

I agree to take part in this study.

Your participation in this study is invaluable and your answers helps researcher to collect reliable data. This will take approximately 30 minutes to answer this questionnaire.

Questionnaire A–Culture Stress (CS)

Please read each statement and choose one of the options (0, 1, 2 or 3) which indicate how you feel about living away from your country. There are no right or wrong answers. Please do answer ALL questions.

Higher degree means that the students suffering cultural stress. On contrary, lower degree they are not suffering the stress.

0 = Not at all 1 = Some degree 2 = Considerable degree' 3 = Very much

Items	0	1	2	3
9- I miss the familiar way of life in my own country.				
10- It's hard being away from the people I love.				
11- It is lonely for me here in the UK.				
12- I feel less important here than at home.				
13- People treat me differently because of my cultural background.				
14- I feel uncomfortable in the UK culture.				
15- I don't feel safe here in the UK.				
16- I feel I really belong here at the university.				

Questionnaire B- Social Sojourner Support (SSS)

The statements that follow relate to certain helpful behaviours that might make your stay in England easier or more pleasant. Read each description carefully and consider if you know persons who would perform the behaviours described. Use the following scale:

Please read each statement and choose one of the options (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5).

Higher degree means that the participants received support on the the other hand lower degree they goe lees support and they suffering problems.

1 = No one would do this. 2 = Someone would do this 3 = A few would do this 4 = Several would do this 5= Many would do this.

I know persons who would:- SSS

Items	1	2	3	4	5
19- Listen and talk with you whenever you feel lonely or depressed.					
20- Give you tangible assistance in dealing with any communication or language problems that you might face.					
21- Explain things to make your situation clearer and easier to understand.					

22- Spend some quiet time with you whenever you do not feel like going out.					
23- Explain and help you understand the local culture and language.					
24- Accompany you somewhere even if he/she doesn't have to.					
25- Share your good times and bad times.					
26- Help you deal with some local institutions' official rules and regulations.					
27- Accompany you to do things whenever you need someone for company.					
28- Provide necessary information to help orient you to your new surroundings.					
29- Comfort you when you feel homesick.					
30- Help you interpret things that you don't really understand.					
31- Tell you what can and cannot be done in England.					
32- Visit you to see how you are doing.					
33- Tell you about available choices and options.					
34- Spend time chatting with you whenever you are bored.					
35- Reassure you that you are loved, supported and cared for.					
36- Show you how to do something that you didn't know how to do.					

Questionnaire C – General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28)

Could you please answer the following questions by circling the response that is most appropriate for you?

HAVE YOU RECENTLY:

Items	1	2	3	4
1. Been feeling perfectly well and in good health?	'Not at all'	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
2. Been feeling in need of a good tonic?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
3. Been feeling run down and out of sorts?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
4. Felt that you are ill?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
5. Been getting any pains in your head?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
6. Been getting a feeling of tightness or pressure in your head?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
7. Been having hot or cold spells?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
8. Lost much sleep over worry?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual

9. Had difficulty in staying asleep once you are off?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
10. Felt constantly under strain?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
11. Been getting edgy and bad-tempered?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
12. Been getting scared or panicky for no good reason?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
13. Found everything getting on top of you?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
14. Been feeling nervous or strung-up all the time?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
15. Been managing to keep yourself busy and occupied?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
16. Been taking longer over the things you do?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
17. Felt on the whole you were doing things well?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
18. Been satisfied with the way you've carried out your tasks?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
19. Felt you are playing a useful part in things?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
20. Felt capable of making decisions about things?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
21. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
22. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
23. Felt that life is entirely hopeless?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
24. Felt that life isn't worth living?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
25. Thought of the possibility that you might make away with yourself?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual

26. Found at times you couldn't do anything because your nerves were too bad?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
27. Found yourself wishing you were dead and away from it all?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
28. Found that the idea of taking your own life kept coming into your mind?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual

QuestionnaireD- Coping Strategy (Cope)

The items below show how you usually deal with life problems and stressful situation. There are lots of ways to try to deal with stress. This questionnaire asks you to indicate what you generally do and feel when experience stressful events. Obviously, different events bring out somewhat different responses, but think about what usually do when you are under a lot of stress. There are no wrong or right answers.

Please read each statement and choose one of the options (1, 2, 3 or 4).

1 = I haven't been doing this at all.	2 = I've been doing this a little bit	3 = I've been doing this a medium amount	4 = I've been doing this a lot.
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Items	1	2	3	4
29- I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.				
30- I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.				
31- I've been saying to myself "this isn't real".				
32- I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.				
33- I've been getting emotional support from others.				
34- I've been giving up trying to deal with it.				
35- I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.				
36- I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.				
37- I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.				
38- I've been getting help and advice from other people.				
39- I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.				
40- I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.				
41- I've been criticizing myself.				
42- I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.				
43- I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.				
44- I've been giving up the attempt to cope.				
45- I've been looking for something good in what is happening.				
46- I've been making jokes about it.				
47- I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.				

48- I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.				
49- I've been expressing my negative feelings.				
50- I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.				
51- I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.				
52- I've been learning to live with it.				
53- I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.				
54- I've been blaming myself for things that happened.				
55- I've been praying or meditating.				
56- I've been making fun of the situation.				

Questionnaire E – Religion Problem Solving (RPS)

Please read each statement and choose one of the options (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) representing the extent to which religion is a part of your problem solving strategies. There are no right or wrong answers. Although we use the term “God,” please answer this question in terms of what is appropriate to your beliefs.

1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = Fairly often 4 = Very often 5 = Always

Items	1	2	3	4	5
19- When thinking about a difficulty, I try to come up with possible solutions without God's help.					
20- When faced with trouble, I deal with my feelings without God's help.					
21- When deciding on a solution, I make a choice independent of God's input.					
22- When I have difficulty, I decide what it means by myself without help from God.					
23- After I've gone through a rough time, I try to make sense of it without relying on God.					
24- I act to solve my problems without God's help.					
25- When a troublesome issue arises, I leave it up to God to decide what it means for me.					
26- In carrying solution my problems, I wait for God to make the best choice for me.					
27- I do not think about different solution because God provides them for me.					
28- Rather than trying to come up with the right solution to a problem myself, I let God decide how to deal with it.					
29- I don't spend much time thinking about troubles I've had; God makes sense of them for me.					
30- When a situation makes me anxious; I wait for God to take those feelings away.					
31- When considering a difficult situation, God and I work together to think of possible solutions.					
32- When I have a problem, I talk to God about it and together we decide what it means.					
33- After solving a problem. I work with God to make sense of it for me.					
34- Together, God and I put my plans into action.					

35- When I feel nervous and anxious about a problem, I work together with God to find a way to relieve my worries.					
36- When it comes to deciding how to solve a problem. God and I work together as a partners.					

Questionnaire F- Social-Cultural Adaptation Scale SCAS

For the items below, please read each of the following statements and choose one of the options (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) that best describes the amount of difficulty that you have experienced in the UK.

1=No difficulty.	2=Slight difficulty.	3=Moderate difficulty.	4=Great difficulty.	5=Extreme difficulty.
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Items	1	2	3	4	5
19- Making friends.					
20- Using the transport system.					
21- Making yourself understood.					
22- Getting used to the pace of life.					
23- Going shopping.					
24- Talking about yourself with others.					
25- Understanding jokes and humour.					
26- Following rules and regulations.					
27- Dealing with the bureaucracy (administration).					
28- Finding your way around.					
29- Dealing with people staring at you.					
30- Going to coffee shops/restaurants.					
31- Understanding the local language.					
32- Living away from family members overseas.					
33- Dealing with people of higher status.					
34- Understanding what is required from you at university.					
35- Coping with academic work.					
36- Expressing your ideas in class.					

Questionnaire G – Coping flexibility (CFS)

When we feel stress, we try to cope using various actions and thoughts. The following items describe stress-coping situations. Please indicate how these situations apply to you by choosing one of the following for each situation: (very applicable, applicable, somewhat applicable and not applicable).

Please read each statement and choose one of the options (1, 2, 3 or 4).

1 = Very applicable 2 = Applicable 3=Somewhat applicable 4 = Not applicable.

Items	1	2	3	4
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11- When a stressful situation has not improved, I try to think of other ways to cope with it.				
12- I only use certain ways to cope with stress.				
13- When stressed, I use several ways to cope and make the situation better.				
14- When I haven't coped with a stressful situation well, I use other ways to cope with that situation.				
15- If a stressful situation has not improved, I use other ways to cope with that situation.				
16- I am aware of how successful or unsuccessful my attempts to cope with stress have been.				
17- I fail to notice when I have been unable to cope with stress.				
18- If I feel that I have failed to cope with stress, I change the way in which I deal with stress.				
19- After coping with stress, I think about how well my ways of coping with stress worked or did not work.				
20- If I have failed to cope with stress, I think of other ways to cope.				

Questionnaire H–Cultural Assimilation Index (CAI)

Please read each item and mark the appropriate answer opposite the statement.

No.	Items	Code	Score
1	What kind of food do you usually eat at home?	Mainly, traditional food which I usually eat in my country	1
		Mixed	2
		English	3
2	Do you ever eat out?	Never	1
		Occasionally	2
		Regularly	3
3	Are forbidden foods avoided?	Rules always kept (Hindu/beef; Muslim/Pork)	1
		Only with Parents	2
		No	3

4	Traditional dress worn.	Women – always	1
		Sikh men-turbans	1
		Muslim/Hindu men traditional at home and sometimes outside	1
		Women – western at work or out, traditional at home	2
		Men – traditional at home, not out	2
		Traditional styles for ceremonies/special occasions only both sexes)	3
5	Do you drink alcohol when you are out?	Never	1
		Sometimes for special occasions	2
		Sometimes because want to/yes	3
6	Do you drink alcohol at home?	Never	1
		Sometimes for special occasions	2
		because want to/yes	3

7	How do you rate your English speaking ability?	Very poor	1
		Just adequate for shopping/work	2
		Good enough for brief conversation with neighbours etc...	3
		Good	4
		Fluent	5
8	What language do you use at home with the family?	My own language all/most of time	1
		Both equally	2
		My own language only when someone present who does not speak English	3
9	How do you rate your reading of English?	None	1
		Little (shopping/from filling)	2
		Fair – some difficulty but can cope	3
		Good e.g. University	4
		Excellent	5
10	Do you read English newspapers?	Never	1
		Sometimes	2

		Regularly	3
11	Extent of TV viewing?	Little – don't understand	1
		Few special programmes	2
		Fairly heavy	3
		Most of time/ non-selective	4

I would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to answer the questions below.

Please tick the number as appropriate.

Age:

1-	From 18 to 24	2-	From 25 to 34	3-	over 35
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Country of birth()

Mother's place of birth (If different to yours.....)

Father's place of birth (If different to yours.....)

Gender:

1-	Male	2-	Female
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Nationality:

Please specify

Country of origin:

(Please specify.....).

Ethnicity:

1-	White British	2-	White Irish	3-	Other background	4-	White Indian subcontinent	5-	African
6-	Latin America	7-	Far East	8-	Middle East Arab	9-	Other please specify.....		

Religion:

Do you believe in God(s)

1-	Yes	2-	No	3	Unsure
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If no, please go to Education partIf (yes) please specify.

What religion do you follow?

1	Christianity	2	Muslim	3	Hindu	4	Sikhism	5	Other please specify.....
								

Education:

1-	Undergraduate	2-	Postgraduate
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How long have you been studying in the UK?

1-	1-3 Years	2-	4-6 Years	3-	7 years and over
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Marital Status:

1	Single	2	Married / Cohabiting	3	Married but separate	4	Divorced	5	Widowed
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Children:

Do you have children?

1-	Yes (if yes what age? (... ..	2-	No
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Does your family live with you?

1-	Yes	2-	No
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Housing Tenure:

1-	Council Tenant	2-	Private Tenant	3-	Owner	4-	Housing Association
5-	Students Accommodation	6-	Sharing House	7-	Host family	8-	Other- please specify.....

Do you own a car?

1-	Yes	2-	No
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Income Per Month:

1-	£ 400 - £ 999	2-	£ 1,000 - £ 1,999	3-	< £ 2,000
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Education funding:

How do you pay university fees?

1-	Self-funded	2-	Scholarship	3-	Other- please specify.....
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Once again thank you for taking part in this study and answering all the questions.

Appendix 6: Ethical approval



Appendix 7: Interview Questionnaire

For international students only



Title of the study

A study on mental health and psychosocial variables among international students in the United Kingdom compared to resident students

Researcher: Khaled Saeed Alsaad

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of international students studying in UK universities compared to resident students. In present study, you will be asked to fill in a series of questionnaires.

Confidentiality: Your participation in this research will remain confidential, and your identity will not be stored alongside your data. Your responses will be assigned a pseudonym, and the list connecting your real name with the chosen pseudonym will be destroyed once all the data is collected and analysed.

Your right:

Interviewees in this research are entirely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to join or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Contact:

If you have any further questions about this study, please contact the researchers: Khaled Alsaad (researcher) (khaled.alsaad@beds.ac.uk), Dr Hossein Kaviani (Supervisor) (hossein.kaviani@beds.ac.uk) & Dr Andrew Clements (second supervisor) (Andrew.Clements@beds.ac.uk), Department of Psychology, Park Square Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 3JU

I agree to take part in this study.

☐

Appendix 8: Interview Questionnaire

Bearing in mind your experiences in the host society (UK), please answer these question:

First Question:

Do you enjoy living in the host society?

Answer:

Second Question:

What the most difficult experience you have had this culture?

Answer:

Third question:

How do you solve your problem in this society?

Answer:

-
1. What does the world look like to you?

Answer:

2. When you describe yourself, what proverbs or sayings do you usually use?

Answer:

3. How does your family and friends look like?

Answer:

How does the future look like?

Answer:

At times of difficulties, what (image or thought) most frequently come to your mind?

Answer:

Is there any simile which best describes your experience in the host society (UK)? If yes, what is it?

Answer:

When you are not successful, how do you describe yourself?

Answer: a game loser.

8. We all have inner conversation about ourselves or others, what is your inner conversation during times when your stress and difficulties escalate?

Answer:

With life experiences which you had in the host society (UK), Please complete each time below as a complete sentences:

1. My life is like....
2. For me, future is like.....
3. Relationship with other people is like.....
4. I see myself as someone who....
5. To me, life difficulties are like....
6. Failure is like.....
7. Other people think I am like.....
8. Making an effort in the host society (UK) is like.....

Gender		Nationality	
Age		University	
Level of education		Religion	

Appendix 9: Manual and online questionnaires

Table 8 demonstrates t-tests results and descriptive measures between data collected through online and manual questionnaires. The differences might be due to different sample sizes.

Table 1: t-test parameters between manual questionnaire and online questionnaire

	Manual & online	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	t-Value	P-Value
CS	Manual	152	11.59	4.63	-5.82	.000
	Online	43	16.00	3.33		
SSS	Manual	303	53.46	14.78	2.17	.031
	Online	55	48.72	15.34		
GHQ	Manual	303	23.91	6.28	.124	.901
	Online	55	23.80	6.17		
Cope	Manual	303	61.66	13.34	-.327	.744
	Online	55	62.30	14.65		
RPS	Manual	303	46.44	14.17	.181	.857
	Online	55	46.07	14.35		
SCAS	Manual	303	37.47	14.18	1.46	.144
	Online	55	34.50	11.59		
CFS	Manual	303	22.75	4.71	.613	.540
	Online	55	22.32	4.81		
CAI	Manual	152	23.15	3.18	.236	.814
	Online	43	23.02	3.01		
IAI	Manual	152	29.92	5.05	2.30	.022
	Online	43	27.88	5.44		
SAI	Manual	152	23.98	9.11	-4.54	.000
	Online	43	30.67	6.03		

Note: RPS=Religious problem Solving; CS=Culture Stress; GHQ=General Health Questionnaire; SCAS=Social-cultural Adaptation Scale; Cope=Brief Cope; SSS=Sojourner Social Support; CFS=Coping Flexibility Scale; Three assimilation indexes (1- Culture Assimilation Index 2-Identification Assimilation Index.3-Structural Assimilation Index).

H1: There are significant differences between international students and resident students on mental health variables.

Table 2 t-test for answering H0.1

	International and UK students	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	t-Value	P-Value
GHQ	International	195	23.99	5.97	.324	.746
	British	163	23.77	6.60		

H2: There are significant differences between international and resident students on coping strategies.

Table 3 Two way ANOVA for answering H0.2

	Level of education	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	F	P-Value
Cope	International	195	65.01	11.70	9.16	.000
	Undergraduate	52	65.61	11.71		
	Postgraduate	143	64.79	11.72		
	British	163	57.87	14.55		

	Undergraduate	122	58.45	14.19		
	Postgraduate	41	56.14	15.65		

H3: There are significant differences between international and resident students on social-cultural adaptation. .

Table 4 Two way ANOVA for answering H0.3

	Gender	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	F	P-Value
SCAS	International	195	38.60	13.36	2.418	.066
	Male	130	38.47	13.50		
	Female	65	38.84	13.17		
	British	163	35.12	14.20		
	Male	60	36.88	14.07		
	Female	103	34.09	14.24		

H 4: There are significant differences between international students and resident students on coping flexibility.

Table 5 t- test for answering H0.4

	International & British	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	T-Value	P-Value
CFS	International	195	23.36	4.84	2.99	.003
	British	163	21.87	4.46		

H5: There are significant differences between Arab and Non-Arab students on cultural stress

Table 6 t- test for answering H 0.5

	Arab & Non-Arab	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	t-Value	P-Value
CS	Arab	110	49.58	16.35	.427	.427
	Non-Arab	85	47.85	13.02		

H6: There are significant differences between international and resident students on religious problem solving.

Table 7 Two way ANOVA H 0.6

	Type of religion	N	Mean	Std- Deviation	F	P-Value
RPS	International	195	48.84	14.97	13.04	.000
	Christianity	35	49.57	13.28		
	Islam	127	49.40	16.07		
	Other	33	49.45	11.60		
	British	163	43.47	12.61		
	Christianity	86	44.69	11.37		
	Islam	19	34.24	8.81		
	Other	58	38.03	9.70		
	T- Christianity	121	49.45	11.90		

	T –Islam	146	49.06	15.38		
	T - Other	91	38.03	11.53		

Table 8: ANOVA parameters

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2068.914	5	413.783	14.115	.000 ^a
	Residual	5540.655	189	29.316		
	Total	7609.569	194			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Total Coping Flexibility Scale, Total_ Sojourner Social Support Index, Total_ Cope Scale, Total_ Culture Stress Scale, Total_ Religious Problem-Solving						
b. Dependent Variable: Total_ General Health Questionnaire						

Appendix 10: Descriptive Assimilation Index

Items	Option	Percentage	Frequency	Items	Option	Percentage	Frequency
1. What kind of food do you usually eat at home?	Mainly, traditional food which I usually eat in my country	189	34.7	5. Do you drink alcohol when you are out?	Never	315	57.8
	Mixed	339	62.2		Sometimes for special occasions	141	25.9
	English	17	3.1		Sometimes because want to/yes	89	16.3
2. Do you ever eat out?	Never	10	1.8	6. Do you drink alcohol at home?	Never	355	65.1
	Occasionally	421	77.2		Sometimes for special occasions	138	25.3
	Regularly	114	20.9		because want to/yes	52	9.5
3. Are forbidden foods avoided?	Rules always kept (Hindu/beef; Muslim/Pork)	281	51.6	7. How do you rate your English speaking ability?	Very poor	17	3.1
	Only with Parents	85	15.6		Just adequate for shopping/work	55	10.1
	No	179	32.8		Good enough for brief conversation with neighbours etc...	437	80.2
4. Traditional dress worn.	Women – always Sikh men- turbans Muslim/Hindu men traditional at home and sometimes outside	183	33.6		Good	22	4.0
	Women – western at work or out, traditional at home Men – traditional at home, not out	145	26.6		Fluent	14	2.6
	Traditional styles for ceremonies/special occasions only both sexes)	217	39.8	8. What language do you use at home with the family?	My own language all/most of time	261	47.9
9. How do you rate your reading of English?	None	4	.7		Both equally	212	38.9
	Little (shopping/fro m filling)	75	13.8		My own language only when someone present who does not speak English	72	13.2

	Fair – some difficulty but can cope	138	25.3	10. Do you read English newspapers?	Never	53	9.7
	Good e.g. University	315	57.8		Sometimes	384	70.5
	Excellent	13	2.4		Regularly	108	19.8
11. Extent of TV viewing?	Little – don't understand	38	7.0				
	Few special programmes	266	48.8				
	Fairly heavy	142	26.1				
	Most of time/ non-selective	99	18.2				